

B X

7255

C7F6

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

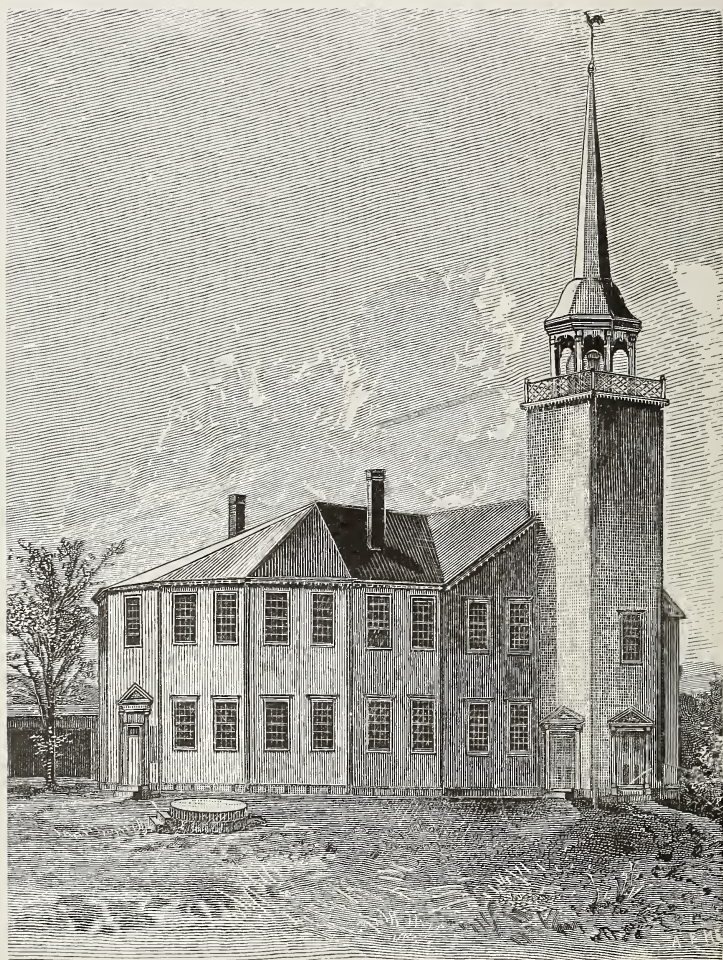
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

CHAP. _____

BY 7256

SHELF _____

.C2 F6



OLD NORTH MEETING-HOUSE, 1751-1870.

A
HISTORY
OF
THE FOUR MEETING-HOUSES
OF
THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY
IN PENNYCOOK, SUBSEQUENTLY RUMFORD,
NOW CONCORD, N. H.
1726-1888.

PRECEDED BY AN INTRODUCTION RELATIVE TO THE FOUR PERIODS
AND FOUR TYPES OF MEETING-HOUSE ARCHITECTURE IN
NEW HAMPSHIRE, FROM ITS SETTLEMENT
IN 1623 TO THE PRESENT TIME.

BY
JOSEPH B. WALKER.

CONCORD, N. H.:
PRINTED BY IRA C. EVANS.
1888.

BX7255
.C7F6

2b.

9 0'00

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE.
OUR FIRST MEETING-HOUSE,	vii
OUR SECOND MEETING-HOUSE,	Facing title-page.
PULPIT OF OUR SECOND MEETING-HOUSE,	x
OUR THIRD MEETING-HOUSE,	xi
GALLERY PLAN OF OUR SECOND MEETING-HOUSE,	10
FLOOR PLAN OF OUR SECOND MEETING-HOUSE,	14
FLOOR PLAN OF OUR THIRD MEETING-HOUSE,	19
OUR FOURTH MEETING-HOUSE,	Facing Page 21
FLOOR PLAN OF OUR FOURTH MEETING-HOUSE,	27

INTRODUCTION.

The term Meeting-House has, until recently, been the name given to most of the houses for public worship in New Hampshire. It was brought to New England by our English ancestors, and was in common use as early certainly as 1635.* In the fatherland it was applied to buildings occupied by dissenters from the established religion, the houses in which this was taught being denominated *churches*—a word which is now being more and more applied to all houses of worship in our cities and larger towns, an instance of the changes constantly occurring in our language.† The late President Lord, of Dartmouth College, very dryly remarked, upon returning from a visit to his old town of York, Maine, “When I was a boy, the people down there use to ‘go to meeting.’ No one goes to meeting now, they all go to *church*.”‡

THE FOUR PERIODS OF MEETING-HOUSE ARCHITECTURE.

The meeting-house architecture of New Hampshire embraces four different periods, and is of four distinct types, whose leading characteristics are clearly defined and unmistakable. Of these, the four meeting-houses of the First Congregational Society in Concord have afforded good examples.

* “Sept. 2, 1635. It is agreed that hereafter no dwelling-house shall be builte above half a myle from the meeting-house.”—*Mass. Records*, Vol. 1, p. 157.

† “*Meeting House*. If Mr. Channing will consult Lancashire; its Puritanism and its Non-Conformity, by the late Dr. Hosley, he will find abundant illustrations of the term ‘meeting-house,’ applied to Dissenters’ chapels. By the Toleration Act of 1689, ‘meeting-houses’ were required to be registered and certified, s. q.”—21 *dis. Inter.*, 1690.

“These are to certify whom it may concern that the house of Peter Gaskell, of Burton Wood (Lane), was certified to this Court for a Meeting Place for a congregation of Protestants, ‘dissenting from the Church of England.’

* * * * *

“In fact, down to late in the eighteenth century, the term was commonly applied to all Non-Conformist chapels.

* * * * *

“Buildings set apart by Dissenters as places of worship are very generally called meeting-houses by Churchmen throughout England.”—*Notes and Queries*, Sixth Series, Vol. 11, pp. 296-7.

‡ “On Sundays, according to the habit of the time, all ordinary books and occupations were laid aside. There was church-going twice a day—‘going to meeting,’ it was always called—never to be omitted by any of the family, save for the reason of sickness.”—*Life of H. W. Longfellow*, Vol. 1, p. 12.

THE FIRST PERIOD.

The first period extended from the settlement of a township to the time when the tillage lands had been cleared and the first temporary dwellings of the inhabitants, frequently of logs, had given place to more commodious framed buildings. It was not synchronous in all parts of the state. Its length varied with the times of settlement and the industrial progress of different localities. It commenced in Concord in 1726, and ended in 1751. In older sections it began earlier and ended earlier. It usually covered from fifteen to thirty years.

THE SECOND PERIOD.

The second period began when the settlers of a township, increased in numbers, had attained to such means as warranted the building of a convenient framed meeting-house of sufficient size to accommodate its whole population. This was longer than the first and reached onward to about the close of the first quarter of the present century.

To this period, more than to any other, belonged the old-time ordinations and installations celebrated by our fathers. All the people of a town then attended meeting at one place. The meeting-house was, in whole or in part, the property of the town. The minister was the town minister, and ministerial settlements were for long periods, not unfrequently for life.* The induction of a new pastor to his office was, consequently, an occasion of rare occurrence and very great interest.

In earliest days the exercises were religious only, solemn, impressive and in harmony with the occasion. At length, however, they took on a dual character. Of the large numbers present, one part gave attention to the sacred services of the occasion, while the other devoted itself to amusements of a character far from sacred, consisting mainly of idle converse, drinking at temporary bars, petty gambling and horse racing.

* A condition of the agreement made in 1730 by the Proprietors of Pennycook (now Concord), with the Rev. Timothy Walker, their first minister, was "that if Mr. Walker, by extreme old age, shall be disenabled from carrying on the whole work of the ministry, that he shall abate so much of his salary as shall be rational." As Mr. W. was then but twenty-five years of age, it would seem that a long pastorate was contemplated. And such it proved, for it continued fifty-two years. It was not, however, an unusual one, as those of some of his contemporaries clearly prove: that of Rev. Ebenezer Flagg, of Chester, having been sixty years; of Rev. James Pike, of Somersworth, sixty; of Rev. John Wilson, of Chester, forty-five; of Rev. John Odlin, of Exeter, forty-eight; of Rev. William Allen, of Greenland, fifty-three; of Rev. Samuel McClintock, of Greenland, forty-eight; of Rev. John Tucke, of Gosport, forty-one; of Rev. Jeremy Fogg, of Kensington, fifty-two; of Rev. William Davidson, of Londonderry, fifty-one; of Rev. Joseph Adams, of Newington, sixty-eight; of Rev. John Moody, of Newmarket, forty-eight; of Rev. Samuel Parsons, of Rye, forty-eight; of Rev. Jonathan Cushing, of Dover, fifty-two. No one of these had a pastorate of less than forty-one years, while seven of them had pastorates exceeding fifty, averaging, indeed, fifty-six and four-sevenths years.

Said a shrewd lawyer, of Concord, to his chore boy upon his return from an ordination at Hopkinton, which he had allowed him to attend :

" Did you have a good time, James ? "

" Yes, sir," said the boy.

" Who preached the ordination sermon ? "

" I don't know, sir," was the honest response.

" Were you not present at its delivery ? " asked the master.

" No, sir," was the timid answer.

" Where were you ? "

" I was at the horse race, sir."

This annex to these sacred gatherings became in time so scandalous a nuisance that the General Court seems to have enacted a law, in 1825, for its suppression.*

THE THIRD PERIOD.

Up to 1819 the support of meeting-houses and the ministry was de-frayed by a tax upon the polls and ratable estates of the inhabitants of the several towns. The law of 1791 "for regulating towns and the choice of town officers," made the support of public worship and the erection and maintenance of meeting-houses town purposes. It provided : " That the inhabitants of each town in this state qualified to vote as aforesaid, at any meeting duly warned and holden in such town, may, agreeably to the constitution, grant or vote such sum or sums of money as they shall deem necessary for the settlement, maintenance and support of the ministry, schools, meeting-houses, school-houses, the maintenance of the poor, for laying out and repairing highways, for building and repairing bridges and for all other necessary charges arising within said town, to be assessed on the polls and estates in the same town, as the law directs."

Soon after the close of the War of 1812, the unanimity of religious sentiment which had before prevailed became less universal. The standing order had been Congregational, but now many avowed preferences for other denominational doctrines and were unwilling to contribute longer to the support of views but partially their own. A sentiment arose, which, ere long, became general, that the support of

* The first section of this act provided : " That no person or persons shall keep any shop, tent, booth, wagon, or other carriage for the sale of spirituous or other liquors within the distance of two miles from any public assembly convened for religious worship."

This provision, however, did not apply to trainings or other public meetings, "called by lawful authority, or any fourth of July or other public anniversary, or at his or their own store or dwelling-house by any person or persons who shall be licensed according to law to retail spirituous liquors."

The third section further provided : " That if any person or persons shall wilfully interrupt or disturb any meeting assembled for religious worship by making a noise, or by rude or indecent behavior, or by exhibiting any shows or plays, or by promoting or aiding any horse-racing or gambling of any description, so as to interrupt or disturb the order of any meeting, he or they, on conviction thereof before any justice of the peace, shall pay a fine not exceeding ten dollars nor less than one dollar."

religious worship should be voluntary and that no person should be taxed for its maintenance against his will.*

In 1819, the prevailing sentiment was embodied in an act of the Legislature, popularly known as the Toleration Act, which severed entirely the connection between church and state. It declared "That the tenth section of the act of which this is an amendment, be and the same is hereby repealed. *Provided*, That towns, between which and any settled minister there is, prior to, or at the passing of this act, a subsisting contract, shall have a right from time to time to vote, assess, collect and appropriate such sum or sums of money as may be necessary for the fulfillment of such contract and for repairing meeting-houses now owned by such towns, so far as may be necessary to render them useful to such town for town purposes. *Provided*, That no person shall be liable to taxation for the purpose of fulfilling any contract between any town and settled minister who shall, prior to such assessment, file with the town clerk of the town where he may reside a certificate declaring that he is not of the religious persuasion or opinion of the minister settled in such town.

"That each religious sect or denomination of Christians in this state may associate and form societies, may admit members, may establish rules and by-laws for their regulation and government and shall have all the corporate powers which may be necessary to assess and raise money by taxes upon the polls and ratable estates of the members of such associations; and to collect and appropriate the same for the purpose of building and repairing houses of public worship and for the support of the ministry; and the assessors and collectors of such associations shall have the same powers in assessing and collecting and shall be liable to the same penalties as similar town officers are liable to. *Provided* that no person shall be compelled to join or support or be classed with or associated to any congregation, church, or religious society without his consent first had and obtained."

* This sentiment is apparent in the organization of denominational Societies about this time. During the five years of 1815-1820 inclusive, the legislature chartered no less than sixty-eight, viz :

Congregational. In 1815, Claremont, Epsom, Jaffrey, Milton, Ossipee, Pembroke, Wolfborough and Winchester; in 1816, Bradford, Gilsom, Lebanon, Loudon, New Chester, Plaistow and Raymond; in 1817, Gilmanton and Meredith; in 1818, Barrington, Campton, Hopkinton, Hillsboro', and Wilton; in 1819, Canaan, Conway, Farmington, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Plymouth and Wendell—29.

Baptist. In 1816, Candia, Dublin, Loudon, Northampton and Sanbornton; in 1817, Hampstead, Keene and Milford; in 1818, Chichester, Exeter, Mason, Nelson and Wilton; in 1819, Chester, Chesterfield, Lee, Lyne, Newport and Pittsfield—19.

Methodist. In 1817, Concord; in 1818, Dover, Landaff and Bridgewater; in 1819, Chester—5.

Universalist. In 1815, Alstead; in 1816, Goffstown, Lebanon and Portsmouth; in 1817, Rindge and Washington; in 1818, Atkinson, Hampstead, Chesterfield, Westmoreland and United Christian; in 1819, Andover, Exeter, Winchester and Effingham—14.

Episcopalian. In 1816, Walpole—1.

THE FOURTH PERIOD.

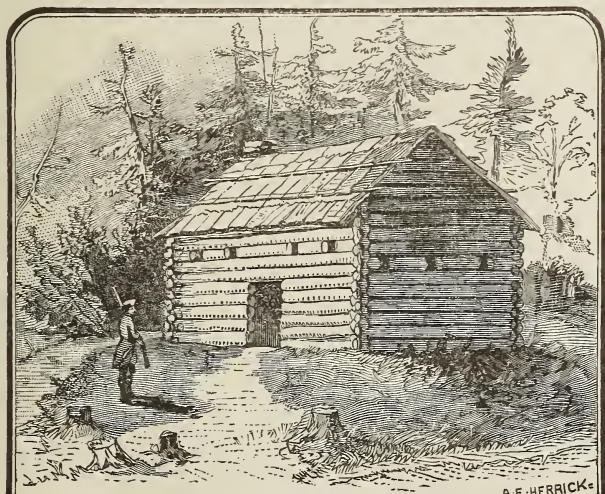
It is impossible to mark definitely the commencement of the fourth period. In many sections the third still prevails. Indeed, the fourth has as yet reached only the large towns where increased populations as well as new religious and social requirements demand enlarged structures of more complicated designs. The present time may be considered transitional, connecting the third period now going out with the fourth gradually coming in. How long the latter is to continue, or what are to be its marked characteristics, it is yet too early to predict. The announcement of its advent answers our purpose.

THE MEETING-HOUSES OF THE FOUR PERIODS.

The architectural characteristics of the meeting-houses of the four periods varied greatly, and reflect the popular demands of the several times to which they belong.

THE MEETING-HOUSE OF THE FIRST PERIOD.

This was a rude structure, and when it preceded the saw-mill, as it often did, had walls built of logs and a roof covered by riven shingles or bark. The axe, the shave, and the auger were the only tools required in its construction.



OUR FIRST MEETING-HOUSE.

The meeting-house was for a time the only public building in the township to which it belonged, and served more uses than one. In it were held not only meetings for religious worship, but others for town and proprietary purposes as well. The ratification of the constitution of the United States by New Hampshire, in 1788, was made in our second meeting-house. When located upon the frontier, it served as required, during the French and Indian wars, as a fortification. For that reason the window openings were small and high

enough above the ground to protect the people within from the arrows of Indians who might be lurking in ambush without. *a*

The first Concord meeting-house was of this description and served all these purposes. It afforded the only place for public assemblages from the time of its erection in 1726-1727 to 1751.

It was the fifteenth original meeting-house built in New Hampshire, and the second on the west side of Merrimack river. The earliest settlements of the state had been made upon the east side, and all the meeting-houses of earlier dates than ours, with the single exception of that at Dunstable, built in 1678,* had been upon that side, and erected at the following places and dates, viz.: Dover, 1633 or '4; Exeter, between 1638 and 1642; Hampton, 1638; Gosport,† probably between 1679 and 1685; Durham, 1655; Portsmouth, before 1640; Newcastle,‡ before 1695; Greenland,§ about 1706; Hampton, Falls, as early as 1611;§ Newington, probably before 1715;§ Stratham, 1718; Kingston, probably not long after 1707; Derry, 1721;§ and Rye, 1725.||

These were all, probably, of moderate dimensions. Ours was forty feet long and twenty-five feet wide. That of Boscawen, built some ten years later, was ordered by the proprietors of the township to be "forty feet long and of the same width of Rumford Meeting-House, and two feet higher, said house to be built of logs."¶

Their interiors were very simple. Rows of plain benches on the opposite sides of a middle aisle were the seats. For these, in the absence of boards, logs split in halves afforded a temporary substitute. The men set upon one side of the house, and the women upon the other. By-and-by, by permission, an occasional pew was built at private expense and for private use.

THE MEETING-HOUSES OF THE SECOND PERIOD.

The meeting-houses of the second period were much larger than those of the first. They were built for the accommodation of enlarged populations, all the inhabitants of a town then gathering at one place for worship, and having but one minister, who was sup-

a The records of the town of Nottingham give a clear description of one of these primitive meeting-houses. October 18, 1725, the proprietors voted to build a "block-house with a roof, sixty feet long, thirty feet wide, and ten feet high."

About two years later, Nov. 17, 1727, they again voted, "to let the block-house out to be shingled and underpinned at the cheapest rate," and still later, on the twenty-first of May, 1729, they further voted that there "shall be no fire kept on the Lord's Day to Disturb the people in the public Worship in the Block-House, and Joseph Hall and Andrew McClerry are to lay a Flore and fit one end of the Block House for a minister to preach in."—*Cogswell's Hist. of Nottingham*, pp. 89 and 90.

* Fox's Hist. of Dunstable.

† Jenness's Hist. of Isles of Shoals.

‡ Albee's Hist. of New Castle.

§ Lawrence's Hist. of New Hampshire Churches.

|| Farmer and Moore's N. H. Gazetteer.

¶ Coffin's Hist. of Boscawen:

ported by a tax upon the polls and ratable estates in townships. Some of these are still standing and have undergone but little alteration.

The floor outline of these houses was generally a parallelogram of some sixty by forty feet. They were of two stories, and were covered by roofs sloping from a common ridge to the plates of the side walls. They were lighted by two rows of large windows, and were entered by a doorway on the front side and on each end, the two last mentioned being generally protected by two-storied porches covered by hipped roofs. These contained vestibules and stairways leading to the galleries. One of these porches was sometimes carried to a height sufficient for a belfrey, above which rose a slender spire bearing a weather vane of fantastic shape, quite often that of a cock, whence the name, "weather-cock."

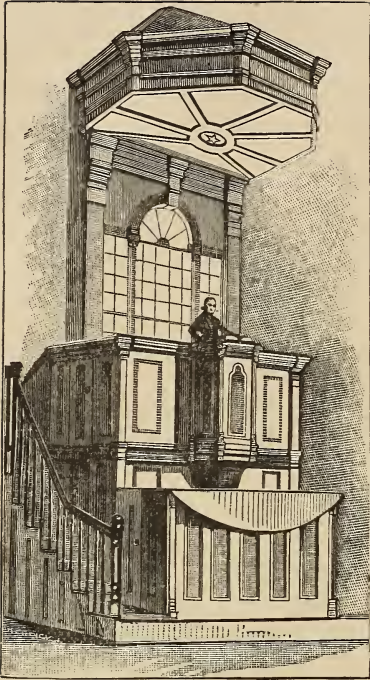
The meeting-houses of this period were framed buildings whose main timbers, often of oak and of extraordinary size, were covered with pine boards and clapboards, to which were added base boards, moulded window casings, elaborately ornamented cornices, comely pilasters and door heads, all being in the colonial style of architecture, of which many afforded fine illustrations. Some of them far surpassed in beauty the houses of the third period by which they were superseded.* But some of the humbler houses which were without porches, steeples or chimneys, were cheerless looking edifices, possessing few architectural features above those of a well-finished barn.

Upon the outside wall, near the side of the front door, was a bulletin-board, upon which were posted notices of town, society, and other public meetings, as well as legal notices, including in particular the "publishments" by the town-clerk of intended marriages.

In early periods, when many of the people went to meeting on horse-back, the "horse block" was an important adjunct to the meeting-house. At this, mounted and dismounted large numbers of the female members of the congregation. At a later date, when the carriage superseded the pillion, the "horse block" retired and the horse shed appeared.

The interior plans of the meeting-houses of this period were similar in all. A broad aisle led from the front door to the pulpit, flanked on either side by a row of square pews. A narrower one, parallel with the walls extended all around the house to give access to two other rows, one between it and the walls, and another between it and the pews upon the middle aisle. The wall pews were raised about eight inches above the general floor level of the house. All were about five or six feet square, furnished with a door opening upon the aisle and seats upon the other three sides, so hung upon hinges that they could be raised when the audience stood, as during the "long prayer," and allow their occupants to lean upon the pew-rail, a matter of no small consequence.

* Specimens of the meeting-houses of this period may be seen at Tilton and Henniker.



PULPIT OF OUR SECOND MEETING-HOUSE.

numerous panes of seven by nine glass, often curtainless and loosely fitted in their frames, gave free admission to the blazing sun in summer, and, rattling in their fastenings, obstructed but little the cold winds of winter.

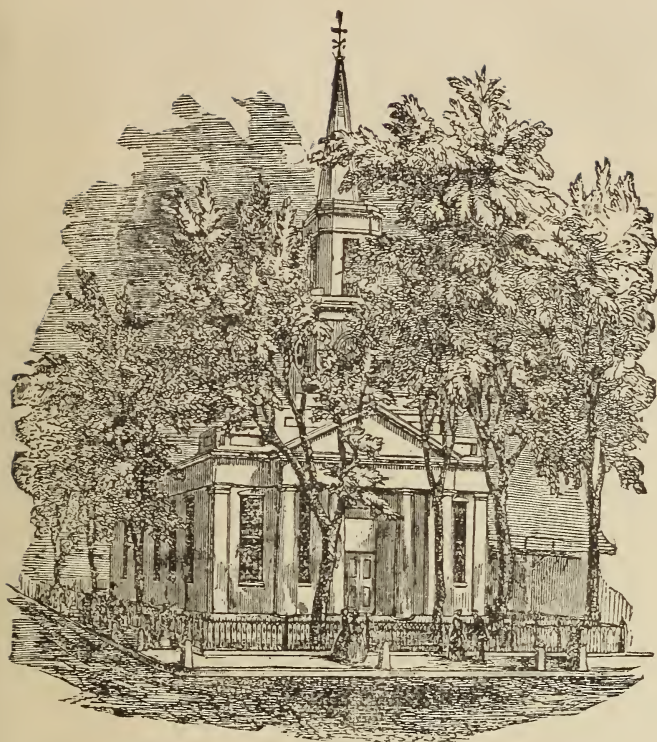
Some of these houses were elaborately finished and very large, having seats of sufficient number for the accommodation of from ten to fifteen hundred persons. Generally located upon elevated ground and painted white; like a city upon a hill, they could be seen from far and near. To them the guide-boards pointed, and to them the worshippers of this period literally "went up to the House of the Lord."

THE MEETING-HOUSE OF THE THIRD PERIOD.

The meeting-house of the third period was a one-story structure and smaller than that of the preceding. Its ground plan was a parallelogram. It was entered at one end which formed its front; above the gable rose a bell tower, sometimes terminated by battlements and at others by a spire and vane. Occasionally, a portion of the facade was projected a little beyond its main front line and, ornamented by columns supporting a low gable, formed a shallow porch. The window and door openings were generally rectangular, but were occasionally finished with round, arched heads. Most of the windows were very long, being about two-thirds the height of the wall, those

The pulpit, which was located against the wall upon the side opposite the front door, was a panelled structure, some seven or eight feet square and as many high. It was reached by a flight of stairs upon one side, whose rail and balusters were often of elaborate workmanship. Behind it was an ornamented window, often arched at the top, and flanked by a narrow one on each side. A semi-circular projection of its front wall added to its architectural importance and afforded a standing place for the minister. Above it was an elaborately panelled and moulded sounding board, sometimes attached to the wall like a canopy and at others suspended from the ceiling. Below and in front was a square pew for elderly men of impaired hearing and for the deacons.

The gallery extended around the other three sides of the house. The part opposite the pulpit was set apart for the choir. The rest of it was occupied by benches and pews. The windows, large and glazed with nu-



THE THIRD MEETING-HOUSE.

lighting the interior being upon the sides of the building. The exterior walls were clapboarded and ornamented with plain bases and cornices. The roof was of moderate pitch and sloped toward the sides. The whole exterior was usually painted white, with the exception of the blinds, which were invariably green. Entrance to the audience room was through a low vestibule, above which was the singers' gallery.

The interior plan was simple. In some houses one central and two side aisles, and in others two side aisles extended from the entrance doors to a transverse passage in front of the pulpit. Upon these opened tiers of long and narrow pews. There were generally no side galleries and the pulpit, a simpler structure than that of the second period, stood upon a platform some three or four feet high, from which the clergyman could be seen by all composing his audience. Whenever an organ was introduced it was accommodated as best it could be in the singers' gallery. The meeting-houses of this period were warmed by stoves placed usually at one end of the house, whose radiating surface was supplemented by their funnels which entered chimneys at the other end.

By this arrangement of the interior most auditors faced the minister, while their better furnishings and smaller proportions rendered

these houses far more comfortable, particularly in winter, than those they had supplanted; architecturally, they were very much inferior. Most of them ante-dated the advent of the architect to New Hampshire, and their designs were the joint product of the joiner and building committee.

THE MEETING-HOUSE OF THE FOURTH PERIOD.

It is yet too early to define the characteristics of the meeting-house of the fourth period—these are yet undetermined. In many localities increased wealth and enlarged populations have called for more artistic and imposing structures than those of the last. New requirements have also rendered necessary important modifications of former designs. The Sunday School, week-day meetings of various kinds, as well as more general ones of a social character, require new designs unlike, in many particulars, any suggested by former experiences. Thus far these have been fairly met, and the meeting-house of the present period has been constructed somewhat in accordance with architectural rules and is æsthetically the superior of those of former times.

Thus, during two centuries and a half, New Hampshire has had four distinctly marked types of meeting-house architecture. A comparison of their leading characteristics with the religious needs of those who reared them will conclusively show that the former were the suggestions of the latter, and that the block-house upon the skirt of the forest met as well the needs of the first period as does the more complicated structure of the present day the necessities of the last.

OUR FIRST MEETING-HOUSE.

1727-1751.

In every true picture of early New England civilization, the meeting-house occupies a prominent place in the foreground. One of the conditions of the grant of our township, imposed by the General Court of Massachusetts Bay, from whom it was received in 1725, was, "That a convenient house for the public worship of God be completely finished within the term aforesaid [three years] for the accommodation of all such as shall inhabit the aforesaid tract of land."¹

This condition was faithfully and promptly fulfilled. Before the first furrows had been turned, even before the township had been surveyed, the intended settlers, at a meeting held in Andover, Massachusetts, on the eighth day of February, 1726, "Agreed and voted, that a block house, twenty-five feet in breadth and forty feet in length, be built at Penny Cook for the security of the settlers." The last phrase of this vote, "for the security of the settlers" indicates plainly the purpose of that house. It was intended as a bulwark, not against error and ungodliness only, but against the fierce assaults of the savage as well. Farther action was taken at the same meeting by the appointment of a committee of five to secure its early erection.² And, as if this was not enough, they appointed another committee of three to examine the charges made for this work, and to allow and pay from the township treasury such as they might deem reasonable.³

Tradition has preserved the location of this our first meeting-house, which stood beneath the arches of the primeval forest, upon the north side of the brook now concealed beneath the roadway, near the corner of Main and Chapel streets. Of necessity, and appropriately as well, it was built of logs. Forty feet was the length of it and twenty-five feet was the breadth of it. It was of one story, and its rough walls were pierced with small square windows, sufficiently high from the ground to protect its occupants from the missiles of Indian foes.⁴ Its floor was the virgin soil. Its roof was of riven pine or of the trunks of sapling trees.

It was commenced in 1726, the same year that the survey of the township was

1 It is a notable fact, that the first public assembly in the township was one for public worship, held on Sunday, the fifteenth day of May, 1726, and composed of a committee of the General Court, surveyors, and some of the proprietors, who had arrived two days before. They had come to survey the township and were attended by their chaplain, Rev. Enoch Coffin, who performed divine service in their camp at Sugar Ball Plain, both parts of the day.—*Committee's Journal*.

2 Agreed and voted, That John Chandler, Moses Hazzen, Nehemiah Carlton, Nathan Simonds and Ebenezer Stevens be a committee, and they are hereby empowered to build, either by themselves, or to agree with workmen, to build a block house of twenty-five feet in breadth and forty feet in length, as in their judgment shall be most for the security of the settlers.—*Prop. Rec., Vol. A., p. 23*.

3 Agreed and voted, That Timothy Johnson, John Osgood and Moses Day be chosen, appointed and empowered to examine the charges that shall arise in building a blockhouse at a place called Penny Cook, or any other charges that shall arise in bringing forward the settlement, and to allow as in their judgment shall be just and equal, and also to draw money out of the treasury for the defraying of said charges.—*Prop. Rec., Vol. A., p. 24*.

4 At times during the French and Indian wars, "On the Sabbath the men all went armed to the house of worship; stacked their guns round a post in the middle, with powder horn and bullet pouch slung across their shoulders, while their revered pastor,—who is said to have had the best gun in the parish,—prayed and preached with his good gun standing in the pulpit."—*Bouton's History of Concord, page 154*.

begun, and finished in 1727,¹ months before the first family moved into the settlement.² It was the first permanent building completed in Penny Cook and antedates the saw and grist mills, two of the earliest and most important structures in early New England towns. The precise date of its completion has been lost, but it appears from their records that a meeting of the township proprietors was held in it as early as the fifteenth of May, 1727. From that time onward, for more than twenty years, it was the place of all considerable gatherings of the good people of Penny Cook.

Two years after its completion (1729), when a saw mill had been erected, measures were taken to substitute for its floor of earth a more comfortable one of wood.³ The year following, in anticipation of the settlement of "a learned, orthodox minister," farther action was taken to hasten the completion of this and perhaps other improvements of its interior.⁴

On the eighteenth of November of this year (1730), there assembled within its rude walls the first ecclesiastical council ever held in New Hampshire north of Dunstable and west of Somersworth. It was convened for the purpose of assisting in the formation of this church and for ordaining and installing its first minister, the Rev. Timothy Walker, who served it with great fidelity for fifty-two years.⁵ For a considerable time afterwards this church occupied an extreme frontier position.

There is little reason to suppose that there were any social inequalities among the settlers of this remote township, or if, perchance, any such existed, that they would have been manifested in the meeting-house. One is surprised, therefore, to learn that leave was granted on the fifteenth day of March, 1738, to Mr. James Scales, afterwards for thirteen years the minister of Hopkinton, to build a pew upon the floor of this building.⁶

Fourteen days later, March 29, 1738, it was decided, owing to the increase of population, to enlarge the existing accommodations by the erection of galleries, and, so far as necessary, to repair the house.⁷

This little block-house beside the brook in the wilderness, rude and humble as it was, served the triple purpose of sanctuary, school-house and town-hall, clearly indicating to all who saw it the three leading elements of our New England civilization,—religion, universal education, and self-government.

1 Edward Abbot deposed, that on the eighth day of May, 1727, he with many others set out from Andover on their journey to a new township called Penny Cook, in order to erect a house which had been sometime before begun, which was designed by the settlers for a meeting house for the public worship of God.—*Deposition of E. Abbot, in Bow Controversy.*

2 Jacob Shute deposed "that in the fall of the year 1727 he assisted in moving up the first family that settled at Penny Cook, that he there found a meeting house built."—*Deposition of J. Shute, in Bow Controversy.*

3 May 1, 1729. "Voted that there be a floor of plank or boards laid in the meeting house at the charge of the community of Penny Cook, and that Lieut. Timothy Johnson and Mr. Nehemiah Carlton be a committee to get the floor laid as soon as may be conveniently."—*Prop. Rec., Vol. 4, page 68.*

4 March 31, 1730. "Voted that Mr. John Merrill be added to Messrs. Timothy Johnson and Nathan Simonds in order to a speedy repairing of the present meeting house at Penny Cook at the settler's cost."

5 The sermon on this occasion, which discussed the subject of "Christian Churches Formed and Furnished by Christ," was preached by the Rev. John Barnard, of Andover, Mass. The charge to the pastor was by the Rev. Samuel Phillips, pastor of the South Church of the same town, and the right hand of fellowship by the Rev. John Brown, of Haverhill, Mass. Near the close of his sermon, Mr. Barnard thus alludes to some of the circumstances attending this remote settlement in the wilderness:—"You, my brethren, * * * have preposed worldly Conveniences and Accommodations, in your engaging in the settlement of this remote Plantation. There is this peculiar circumstance in your Settlement, that it is in a Place, where Satan, some Years ago, had his Seat, and the Devil was wont to be Invoked by forsaken Salvages: A place in which was the Rendezvous and Head Quarters of our Indian Enemies. Our Lord Jesus Christ has driven out the Heathen and made Room for you, that He might have a Seed to serve Him in this Place, where He has been much dishonored in Time past."—*Mr. Barnard's Ordination Sermon, pages 28 and 29.*

6 March 15, 1738. "Voted that Mr. James Scales shall have liberty to build a pew in the one half of the hindermost seat at the west end of the meeting-house that is next the window."—*Town Records, Vol. 1, page 69.*

7 March 29, 1738. "Voted that Ensign Jeremiah Stickney and Benjamin Rolfe, Esq., be a committee to take care that galleries be built in the meeting-house, and that said meeting-house be well repaired at the town cost."

The nations of the old world built no such structures. The French erected none like it upon the shores of the St. Lawrence. Neither did the Dutch at the mouth of the Hudson, or the Spaniards in Florida, or the Cavaliers at Jamestown. Planted upon the line where advancing civilization met retiring barbarism, this was the seed-house from which have sprung the sixteen fairer structures which now adorn our city. When our forefathers laid upon the virgin soil the bottom logs of this block-house, they laid here the foundations not alone of a Christian civilization, but of a sovereign state capital as well. Their simple acts were of consequence far greater than they dreamed.

OUR SECOND MEETING-HOUSE.

1751-1842.

As time passed on, the population of the township so far increased as to imperatively demand a larger meeting-house, and in 1751 a new one was erected upon the spot now occupied by the Walker school-house. Its frame, mostly of oak, was composed of timbers of great size and very heavy. The raising, commenced on the twelfth day of June, occupied a large number of men for three days. The good women of the parish asserted their uncontested rights on the occasion, and afforded such refreshments as the nature of the arduous work required.¹

This building was one of great simplicity and entirely unornamented. It was sixty feet long, forty-six feet wide, and two stories high. It faced the south, on which side was a door opening upon an aisle extending through the middle of the house straight to the pulpit. The seats were rude benches placed upon each side of it; those upon the west being assigned to the women, and those upon the east to the men. The deacons sat upon a seat in front of the pulpit and faced the congregation. A marked attention had been shown the minister by building for him a pew—the only one in the house. This simple structure was without gallery, porch, steeple or chimney.

As the town had, at this date, owing to its controversy with Bow, no organized government, it was built by a company of individuals, designated "The Proprietors of the Meeting-House," and not by the town, as was usually the case. Its erection, under these circumstances, is an important fact, showing conclusively the resolute character of our fathers; for, at this very time, all the fair fields which they had wrested from the wilderness were unjustly claimed by persons of high political and social influence in the province, who, through the agency of the courts, were seeking to seize them.²

Indeed, it was only after a long and expensive controversy of thirteen years, that our ancestors finally obtained, in 1762, at the Court of St. James, a decision securing to them the peaceable possession of their homes. A new spirit was infused into their hearts by this removal, by royal command, of the clouds

¹ Bouton's History of Concord, page 230.

² The Bow controversy, which lasted about twelve years, involved the title to more than two thirds of the entire territory of Concord. Our fathers held this under a grant of the General Court of Massachusetts Bay, made in January, 1725. By the settlement of the boundary line between Massachusetts and New Hampshire, in 1740, it became a part of the latter province.

Some nine years afterwards, by virtue of a grant by the government of New Hampshire, made in May, 1727, a company denominated the Proprietors of Bow, sought by writs of ejectment to dispossess the owners after a peaceable possession of more than twenty years. The parcels sued for were purposely so small as to preclude appeals to the higher courts in England; the object being to so harass the occupants as to force them either to an abandonment of their lands or to a second purchase of them from the Bow claimants.

Our fathers regarded the whole scheme as a base swindle, and at once determined to resist its consummation. Defeated in every case brought before the provincial courts, then largely controlled by these claimants, they dispatched their minister, the Rev. Timothy Walker, as their agent, to London, to seek redress of their wrongs in the home courts. For this purpose, he went to England no less than three times, once in the fall of 1753, once in 1755, and once in 1762. On the twenty-ninth day of December of this last year he obtained of the King in Council a decree reversing the decisions of the Province Courts and establishing the validity of their title,—a decree as just as the claims which it annihilated were wicked.

which had so long hung over them. This was manifested in the increased enterprise everywhere apparent. Improvements, long delayed, were immediately commenced, now that they felt quieted in the possession of their estates.¹

It also appeared, some years later, in the general desire to finish the meeting-house, which the proprietors had hitherto but partially completed.

Measures were instituted as early as 1772 for the purchase of their interest by the town, but the distractions of the revolution so absorbed the time and thoughts of the people that nothing conclusive was done.² Seven years afterwards, however (1779), the town voted "to relinquish the pew ground to any number of persons who would finish the meeting-house and add a porch and the value of another porch." It also voted "to be at the expense of building the steeple, excepting the cost of a porch." Two years later, on the ninth day of July, 1781, a committee was appointed to secure the enlargement of the meeting-house LOT by the purchase of additional land upon the south of it.

The next year (March 5, 1782), another committee was chosen to negotiate with the proprietors of the meeting-house for the purchase of their interest therein.³ The parish accepted their report, and, a month later, April 8, 1782, in accordance with its recommendations, the purchase was made.⁴

In June of this year, the parish decided to finish the house, and Col. Timothy Walker, Jr., Robert Harris and Lieut. Joseph Hall were constituted a committee for that purpose.⁵ The inside was completed in 1783, and, in the course of the next year, the outside was finished.

It had an entrance porch at each end, twelve feet square and two stories high, containing a flight of stairs, in three runs, giving access to the galleries. The east porch was surmounted by a belfry and steeple, upon the spire of which stood, one hundred and twenty-three feet from the ground, a gilded weather-cock, of copper, four feet high and weighing fifty-six pounds. It had glass eyes and a proudly expanded tail. It always looked ready for a fight, ecclesiastical or civil. Our fathers thought much of it, and consulted its movements, in divining the weather, with almost as much confidence as do we the daily telegrams from the meteorological office at Washington.

The posts of this house, which were but partially concealed, were of white oak, and revealed plainly the marks of the hewer's broad-axe. They were twenty-eight feet long, twelve inches square at the bottom and twelve by eighteen inches at the top. Those of the bell-tower were of pine, sixty-four feet long and eighteen inches square. Two pitch pine timbers, each sixty feet long and eighteen inches square, pinned to the cross-beams, confined this tower to the main body of the building. The belfry roof was supported upon graceful arches and covered with unpainted tin. The bell-deck was surrounded by a hand-

1 The diary of the pastor for 1764, the year succeeding that of his last return from England, affords marked evidence of this fact. In it he says:

"April 20. Set out 20 apple trees in the Island orchard and in ye Joel orchard."

"April 23. Bot 40 apple trees of Philip Eastman, brot. ym. home and set ym. out."

"April 24. Set out about 60 young apple trees in ye house lot."

"May 2. Set out eight elm trees about my house."

"May 5. Sowed a bushel of barley and more than a bushel of flax seed and harrowed it in. N. B.—26th of March set out 63 young apple trees in a row, beginning next ye road; then set out two young plum trees; then 5 of best winter apples; then 9 of the spice apple, making 79 in ye whole."

2 March 3, 1772. "Voted that John Kimball, Henry Martin and John Blanchard be a committee to treat with the proprietors of the meeting-house, or such a committee as they shall choose, in order to purchase said house for the use of the parish."—*Town Records, Vol. 2, page 34.*

3 March 5, 1782. "Voted to choose a committee to treat with the proprietors of the meeting-house and see upon what terms they will relinquish the same to the parish."

"Voted that Peter Green, Esq., Capt. Benjamin Emery and Mr. Benjamin Hanniford be a committee for the purpose aforesaid."—*Town Records, Vol. 2, page 112.*

4 For a copy of the deed see Bouton's History of Concord, page 235.

5 June 17, 1782. "Voted to finish the meeting-house in said Concord."

"Voted to choose a committee to provide materials and finish said house."

"Voted that the committee consist of three."

"Voted that Col. Timothy Walker, Mr. Robert Harris and Mr. Joseph Hall be a committee for the purpose aforesaid."—*Town Records, Vol. 2, page 114.*

some railing, and, upon the belfry ceiling was painted, in strong colors, the thirty-two points of the compass; of sufficient size to be easily read from the ground. The walls were clapboarded and surmounted by a handsome cornice.

To the lower floor there were three entrances; one, already mentioned, upon the south side, and one from each porch. Over the two last were entrances to the gallery. There were two aisles besides that before alluded to. One extended from the east to the west door, and the other from one door to the other, between the wall pews upon the east, south and west sides of the house and the body pews.

The pews were square and inclosed by pannelled sides, surmounted by turned balusters supporting a moulded rail. The seats were without cushions and furnished with hinges, that they might be turned up when the congregation stood, as it did, during the long prayer. At the close of this they all went down with one emphatic bang, in response to the minister's "Amen!"

The pulpit which was a huge, square structure and had a semicircular projection in front, was constructed of panelling and loomed up like Mount Sinai, in awful majesty, high above the congregation. Behind it was a broad window of three divisions, above which projected forwards a ponderous sounding board, of elaborate workmanship, as curious in design as it was innocent of utility.

The pulpit was reached by a flight of stairs upon the west side, ornamented by balusters of curious patterns, three of which, each differing from the others, stood upon each step and supported the rail. The bright striped stair carpet, the red silk damask cushion, upon which rested the big Bible, blazing in scarlet and gold, were conclusive evidence that our ancestors lavished upon the sanctuary elegancies which they denied themselves.

At the foot of the pulpit stairs stood a short mahogany pillar, upon which on baptismal occasions was placed the silver font. Just beneath and before the pulpit, was the old men's pew,¹ to the front of which was suspended a semicircular board, which, raised to a horizontal position on sacramental or business occasions, formed a table. A wide gallery, sloping upwards from front to rear, extended the entire length of the east, south and west sides of this house. Next the wall were square pews like those below. In front of these the space was occupied in part by pews and in part by slips, with the exception of a section on the south side, immediately in front of the pulpit, which had been inclosed for the use of the choir. This had a round table in the centre, upon which the members placed their books, pitch-pipe, and instruments of music. At a later date rows of seats took the place of this enclosure. A horizontal iron rod was placed above the breastwork in front of these, from which depended curtains of red. These were drawn during the singing and concealed the faces of the fairer singers from the congregation. At other times they were pushed aside.

In the east gallery, next to and north of the door was the negro pew. It was plainer than the others, and, at most services, had one or more sable occupants. Still farther north, but at a later date, was another of twice the ordinary size, finely upholstered, furnished with chairs and carpeted. It belonged to Dr. Peter Renton, a Scotch physician, who came to Concord about 1822, and for some twenty years was quite prominent as a physician.

Such was our second meeting-house when finished in 1784, with but few, if any exceptions, the best in New Hampshire.

¹ It is remembered with pleasure that in the old meeting-house the venerable old men sat on a seat prepared for them at the base of the pulpit, wearing on their bald heads a white linen cap in summer, and a red woolen or flannel cap in winter. This practice continued as late as 1825 and 1830.

Among the ancient men who thus sat in the "old men's" seat, the following are distinctly remembered: Reuben Abbott, senior; Christopher Rowell, senior; John Shute; Capt. Joseph Farnum; Samuel Goodwin; Moses Abbott; Reuben Abbott, 2d; Nathan Abbott and Chandler Lovejoy."—*Bouton's Hist. Concord*, p. 529.

One object the town had in view, in lavishing so much upon it, was a very praiseworthy desire to accommodate the legislature, which met here for the first time (1782) two years before, and was evincing some disposition to make Concord the capital of the state.

Such it remained until 1802. It was our only meeting-house and to it the families of all sections of the town went up to worship—from Bow line to the Mast Yard, from Beech Hill to Soucook river.¹

Many persons, owing to the want of good roads or of carriages, went to meeting on horseback. A man and woman often rode double, the former upon a saddle, in front, and the latter upon a pillion, behind.² Why this custom was confined to married and elderly persons tradition does not say. For the convenience of persons riding thus there was a mounting block, near the northwest corner of the meeting-house. This consisted of a circular flat stone, eight feet in diameter, raised about three feet from the ground. A few steps led to the top of it, from which many of our ancestors easily mounted their horses at the close of divine service. I am happy to say that this ancient horse-block, as it was termed, is in good preservation and doing kindred duty at the present time.³

The expenses incurred in the completion of this, our second meeting-house, were met by an auction sale of the pews, of which there were forty-seven upon the ground-floor and twenty-six in the gallery. By this sale, it became the joint property of the town and of the pew owners.⁴

1 The population of Concord in 1800 was 2052. "The intermission was short—an hour in winter and an hour and a half in summer. The people all stayed, except those in the immediate vicinity; and hence, as *everybody* attended the same meeting, a fine opportunity was afforded for *everybody* to be acquainted. Old people now say that they used to know every person in town. Thus public worship greatly promoted social union and good feeling throughout the whole community. Whatever new or interesting event occurred in one neighborhood, such as a death, birth, marriage, or any accident, became a subject of conversation, and thus communication was kept up between the people of remote sections, who saw each other on no other day than the Sabbath."—*Bouton's History of Concord*, page 549.

Capt. Joseph Walker, who at a considerably later time commanded a large company of cavalry, resident in Concord and neighboring towns, was accustomed to notify meetings of his company by verbal notices to such members as he happened to see at the meeting-house, on Sunday. These were sufficient, although many were not present, and some lived in Canterbury and Northfield. J. B. W.

2 "'Going to meeting,' as it was called, on the Sabbath, was for seventy-five years and more the universal custom. Elderly people, who owned horses, rode *double*—that is, the wife with her husband, seated on a pillion behind him, with her right arm encircling his breast. The young people of both sexes went on foot from every part of the parish. In summer, young men usually walked barefoot, or with shoes in hand; and the young women walked with coarse shoes, carrying a better pair in hand, with stockings, to change before entering the meeting-house. The usual custom of those west of Long Pond was to stop at a large pine tree at the bottom of the hill west of Richard Bradley's, where the boys and young men put on their shoes, and the young women exchanged their coarse shoes for a better pair, drawing on at the same time their clean, white stockings."—*Bouton's History of Concord*, page 528.

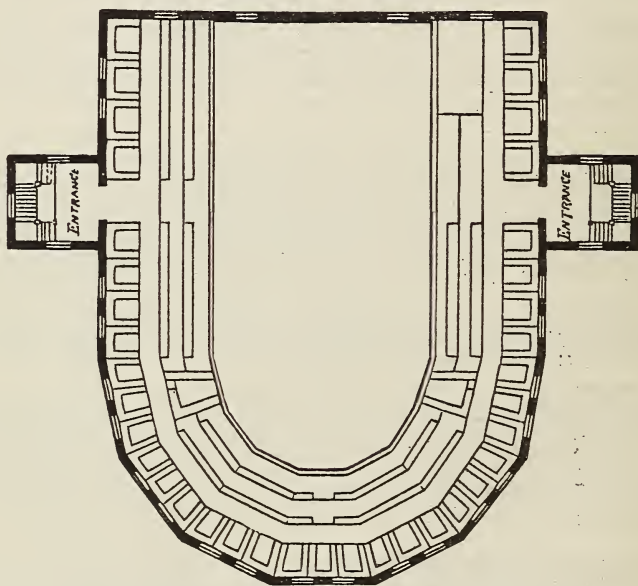
3 "On the west side of the old meeting-house was, and is, a horse-block, famous for its accommodations to the women in mounting and dismounting the horses. It consists in a large, round, flat stone, seven and a half feet in diameter, or about twenty-two feet in circumference, raised about four feet high, with steps. Tradition says it was erected at the instance of the good wives who rode on pillions, and that they agreed to pay a pound of butter apiece to defray the expense."—*Bouton's History of Concord*, page 530.

At a meeting of the Society, held on the 13th day of April, 1869, this horse-block was presented to the writer of this paper, as appears by the following vote in the clerk's records, viz.: "Voted that we present the old Horse-Block to Mr. Jos. B. Walker."

4 March 2, 1784. "Voted to choose a committee to vendue the pews and finish the meeting-house."
 "Voted that this committee consist of three."
 "Voted that Capt. Reuben Kimball, Col. Timothy Walker and Lieut. John Bradley be a committee for the purpose aforesaid."
 "Voted to make an addition of two to the committee aforesaid."
 "Voted that John Kimball and James Walker be the additional committee."
 "Voted to choose a Treasurer to receive the notes for the pews."
 "Voted that Dr. Peter Green be Treasurer."
 "Voted to choose a committee to settle with Treasurer."
 "Voted that this committee consist of three."
 "Voted that Capt. Benjamin Emery, Peter Green, Esq., and Capt. John Roach be the committee for the purpose aforesaid."
 "Voted to reconsider the vote choosing Dr. Peter Green, Treasurer."
 "Voted that the committee appointed to finish the meeting-house proceed to finish the outside of the same the ensuing summer."—*Town Records*, Vol. 2, pages 132 and 133

At the opening of the present century, the congregation had so increased as to require its enlargement. At a meeting holden on the first day of December, 1801, the town accepted a plan for that purpose, presented by a committee previously chosen.¹ This provided for an addition of two stories to the south side. At the same time Richard Ayer and others were authorized, upon furnishing suitable bonds for the faithful performance of the work, to make this addition, at their own cost, and take in compensation therefor, the new pew ground thus acquired.²

This addition, which stood upon two courses of finely hammered granite ashler, was a semi-polygon, having the same length as the house and a middle width of thirty feet. The ridge lines of its roof, starting from a common point, on the ridge of the old structure, half-way between its two extremes, terminated at the several angles of the cornice. The style and quality of the work corresponded to that to which it was an addition. Upon completion, March 1, 1803, it was approved by the town and the bond of the undertakers was surrendered.³



PLAN OF GALLERY, 1803.

1 "Voted to choose a committee of seven persons to propose a plan to the town, viz.:—Jacob Abbot, Richard Ayer, Paul Rolfe, William A. Kenf, Benjamin Emery, Stephen Ambrose, Abial Virgin."

"Voted to accept the report of the above committee, which is as follows, viz.:—"The committee appointed to report a plan for an addition to the meeting-house report that a plan exhibited before the town, being a semi-circle projecting thirty feet in front of the house, and divided into seven angles, and the gallery upon the plan annexed be accepted, and that the owners of pews in the front of the house below have their choice to remain where they are or go back to the wall the same distance from the front door; and that the present front wall pews be placed on a level with the other body pews, that the owners of wall pews in front of the gallery have as good wall pews in front of the addition."

2 "Voted to choose a committee of five to take bonds of Capt. Richard Ayer and others who came forward at this meeting, and offered to make the addition on the plan exhibited by the committee and accepted by the town, viz.: Jacob Abbott, John Blanchard, Benja. Emery, John Kimball and Enoch Brown, the committee, for the above purpose."—*Town Records*, Vol. 2, page 266.

3 March 1, 1803. "Voted to accept the report of the committee appointed to inspect the building and finishing the addition to the meeting-house, viz.: 'We aforesaid committee having carefully inspected the materials made use of in the making the addition to and alterations in the meeting-house in Concord and the workmanship in erecting and finishing the same, hereby certify that it appears to us that

The cost of this addition was met by the sale of the new pews, for which it afforded room. These, unlike the old ones, were long and narrow and denominated slips.

A few years later (1809), the selectmen were directed to remove the two front pews, in the old part of the house, and have erected upon their site four slips. These, upon completion, were sold at auction for the sum of three hundred and twenty-two dollars and twenty-five cents, which was set aside as the nucleus of a fund for the purchase of a bell, in accordance with a vote of the town authorizing this work. Nearly ten years before this (March 31, 1800), the town had offered, with a prudence worthy of highest admiration, "to accept of a bell if one can be obtained by subscription." This liberal offer had lain neglected for nine entire years until now, when private subscriptions increased this nucleus to five hundred dollars, and the long wished for bell was procured. It weighed twelve hundred pounds, and as its clear tones sounded up and down our valley, the delight was universal.

The next year the town ordered it rung three times every day, except Sundays, viz.: at seven in the morning, at noon, and at nine o'clock at night. The times of ringing on Sundays were to be regulated by the selectmen. Four years later it was ordered to be tolled at funerals when desired.

Our first bell ringer was Sherburn Wiggin.¹ He was paid a salary of twenty-five dollars a year and gave a satisfactory bond for a faithful performance of the duties of his office. The prudence of our fathers is clearly seen in the practice of requiring bonds of their public servants and of annually "vending" some of their less valuable offices to the lowest bidder, instead of selling them to the highest, as is said to have been done elsewhere in later days. But I have been sorry to discover in the rapid increase of the sexton's salary, a marked instance of the growing extravagance of our fathers, and of the rapaciousness of the office-holders among them. The salary of the sexton rose rapidly from twenty-five dollars a year in 1810, to forty dollars in 1818, an alarming increase of sixty per cent. in only eight years.

Excepting some inconsiderable repairs in 1817-18, nothing more was done to our second meeting-house for about thirty years. An act of the legislature, passed in 1819, generally known as the "Toleration Act," gradually put an end to town ministries and removed the support of clergymen to the religious societies over which they were settled.²

Two new societies had been already formed in Concord, when this became a law, viz.: the Episcopal in 1817, and the First Baptist in 1818. Five years later, on the 29th July, 1824, the First Congregational Society, in Concord, was formed, and upon the resignation of our third minister, Dr. McFarland, July 11, 1824, the town ministry in Concord ceased.

the materials made use of for each and every part were suitable, and of good quality, and that the work is done in a handsome, workmanlike manner.

Committee. { JACOB ABBOTT,
BENJAMIN EMERY,
JOHN BLANCHARD,
JOHN KIMBALL,
ENOCH BROWN." }

CONCORD, June 3, 1803

—Town Records, Vol. 2, page 276.

¹ Among our early sextons was Sherburn Wiggin in 1810; Benjamin Emery, Jr., in 1811 and 1812, to whom the bell ringing was vendued as the lowest bidders. Subsequently the appointment of sextons was left to the selectmen. Among the later incumbents of this office were Peter Osgood, Thomas B. Sargent and Joseph Brown.

² An act of the legislature "regulating towns and town officers," passed February 8, 1791, provided, "That the inhabitants of each town in this state, qualified to vote as aforesaid, at any meeting duly and legally warned and holden in such town, may, agreeably to the constitution, grant and vote such sum or sums of money as they shall judge necessary for the settlement, maintenance and support of the ministry."

A subsequent act approved July 1, 1819, repealed this provision of the act of 1791 and left the support of the ministry to be provided for by the religious societies of towns.

This important change, together with the organization of new societies, made advisable the disposal of the town's interest in the meeting-house, meeting-house lot and bell.¹ A committee of the town, appointed March 11, 1828, for this purpose, accordingly sold the town's interest in these to the First Congregational Society, in Concord, for eight hundred dollars.² In consideration of the fact that the bell was to be very largely used for the benefit of all its citizens, the town subsequently remitted three hundred dollars of this amount.³

But still again, in 1828, the congregation had outgrown its venerable sanctuary and the demand for more room became imperative. After much discussion, a committee was appointed on the sixteenth day of April of this year, to alter the square pews, on the lower floor of the old part of the house, into slips.⁴

1 March 13, 1826. "Voted, that William A. Kent, Joseph Walker and Abel Hutchins be a committee to take into consideration the subject relative to selling the interest or right the town may have in the meeting-house to the First Congregational Society in Concord and report the expediency and terms at the next town meeting."—*Town Records, Vol. 3, page 58.*

2 This committee reported recommending the sale of the	
Land on which the house stands for,	\$300.00
Town's interest in the meeting-house,	200.00
Town's interest in the bell,	300.00
	<hr/> \$800.00

March 11, 1828. "Voted, that Samuel Herbert, Benjamin Parker and Isaac Eastman be a committee to sell and convey to the First Congregational Society in Concord the interests the town have in the meeting-house, the land on which it stands, and the bell, agreeably to the report of the committee to the town at the last annual meeting, and that they be hereby authorized to sell and convey the same to said society."—*Town Records, Vol. 3, page 96.*

July 25, 1828. The town of Concord, by Samuel Herbert, Benjamin Parker and Isaac Eastman, a committee duly authorized, conveyed to the First Congregational Society in Concord, "all the right, title and interest we have in and unto a certain tract of land situate in said Concord, being the same land on which the meeting-house occupied by said society now stands, described as follows, to wit: Extending from the south side of said house as first built, six rods south; from the east end of said house, six rods east; from the north side of said house, six rods north; and from the west end of said house to the original reserve for a road by the burying ground, including the land on which said house stands, together with said house and the bell attached to the same, reserving a highway on the south side of said house where it now is not less than four rods wide, and also at the west end of said house, and reserving the right to have said bell tolled at funerals and rung as usual on week days and on public occasions; no shed to be erected on said land except on the north side of said house."—*Merrimack Records, Vol. 15, page 380.*

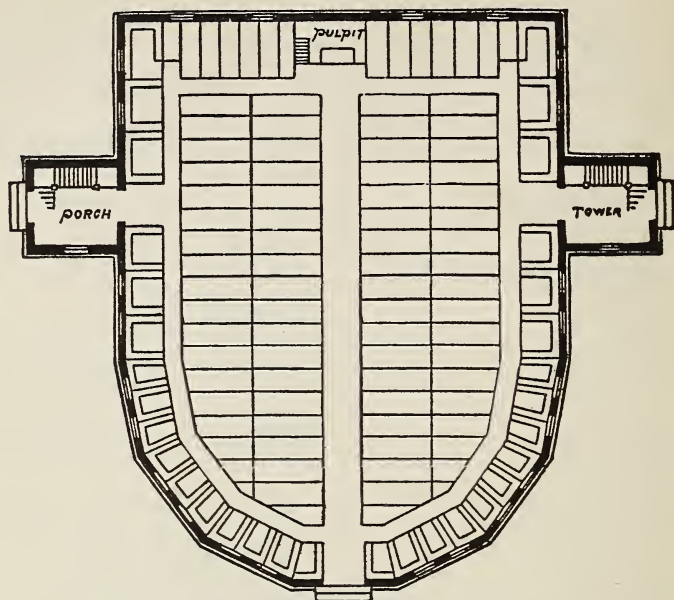
3 November 14, 1828. "Voted that the selectmen be and are hereby authorized to endorse the sum of three hundred dollars on a note the town holds against the First Congregational Society in Concord, being the same which was relinquished for the bell."—*Town Records, Vol. 3, page 121.*

4 Number and owners of pews on the lower floor of the First Congregational Society's meeting-house in Concord, in June, 1828, together with the time when and to whom transferred:

Nos.	NAMES OF OWNERS IN 1828.	WHEN AND TO WHOM TRANSFERRED.
1	Society's free pew.	
2	Jacob A. Potter.	Society's pew.
3	Jonathan Eastman & William West.	
4	Mary Ann Stickney.	
5	Abial and Henry Rolfe.	
6	Richard Herbert.	
7	John Eastman.	
8	Ephraim Abbott.	
9	Isaac Virgin.	
10	Hazen Virgin.	
11	Timothy Chandler.	Samuel Fletcher.
12	John Odlin.	
13	Charles Walker.	Oliver L. Sanborn.
14	Laban Page.	
15	Thomas D. Potter & Lucy Davis.	Thos. D. Potter & D. L. Morrill.
16	John West & Theodore French.	
17	Rhoda Kimball.	
18	Patty Green.	
19	Moses Bullen.	D. N. Hoyt.
20	E. and C. Emery's heirs.	
21	Nathan Chandler, Jr.	
22	Harriet Breed.	James Sanborn.
23	Abel Baker.	
24	Reuben Goodwin & Samuel Carter.	Sewell Hoit.
25	Nathaniel Eastman & Isaac Emery.	
26	Nathaniel Ambrose & Simeon Virgin.	
27	Henry Chandler & John Corlis.	
28	Henry Martin & Isaac F. Ferrin.	Benjamin Parker.
29	Ephraim Farnum.	
30	Robert Davis.	
31	Isaac Farnum.	

This change increased the number of pews from ninety-nine to one hundred and ten, and raised the number of sittings to about twelve hundred and fifty. The east, south and west wall pews remained as they were. The following plan shows the arrangement at this time of the aisles and seats upon the ground floor.

Nos.	NAMES OF OWNERS IN 1828.	WHEN AND TO WHOM TRANSFERRED.
32	Asa Abbott.	Robert Davis.
33	Thomas B. Sargent.	
34	Nathan Ballard, Jr.	
35	Susanna Walker.	Wm. Abbott.
36	Robert Davis.	
37	Abial Walker.	
38	Abial Walker & Nathaniel Abbot.	A. B. Kelley.
39	Benjamin H. Swett.	
40	Society's Pew.	
41	Joseph Farnum.	Nathaniel Abbott.
42	Ezra Ballard.	
43	Timothy Carter.	Abial Walker.
44	Abner Farnum.	
45	Moses Farnum.	
46	Moses Carter.	
47	Samuel B. Davis & A. B. Davis.	
48	James Buswell.	
49	Richard Ayer.	
50	Charles Eastman.	
51	Isaac Dow.	
52	James Eastman.	
53	Daniel Fisk.	Proctor.
54	Richard Flanders & Sons.	
55	Betsey & Hannah Whitney.	
56	John Dimond.	S. A. Kimball.
57	John George.	
58	Moses Shute.	
59	George Hutchins.	James Straw.
60	Jonathan Ambrose.	
61	John Lovejoy.	
62	Thomas Potter.	Ivory Hall.
63	Eliza Abbott.	
64	Isaac Shute.	
65	Jonathan Wilkins.	
66	Abial Eastman.	
67	John Eastman.	
68	Millen Kimball.	
69	John Putney.	
70	Margaret Dow.	
71	Samuel Morrill.	State of New Hampshire.
72	Samuel A. Kimball.	
73	Asaph Evans.	Dr. Colby.
74	Samuel Fletcher.	
75	Richard Bradley.	
76	Moses Hall.	
77	Jeremiah Pecker.	
78	Enoch Coffin.	
79	Joseph Low.	
80	Isaac Hill & Wm. Hurd.	
81	Charles Hutchins.	
82	Abel Hutchins.	Jacob Clough.
83	Joseph Eastman.	
84	Joseph Eastman.	Simeon Farnum.
85	Jacob Hoyt.	
86	Frye Williams.	
87	Samuel Herbert.	
88	William A. Kent.	
89	William Stickney.	
90	John Glover.	
91	Orlando Brown & Sarah Dearborn.	
92	Richard Ayer.	
93	Nathaniel Abbott.	
94	Elizabeth McFarland.	
95	George Kent.	
96	Stephen Ambrose.	Simeon & Benjamin Kimball.
97	Simeon & Benjamin Kimball.	
98	Jonathan Wilkins.	
99	Parsonage.	



PLAN OF GROUND FLOOR IN 1828.

It is a notable fact that very soon after the meeting-house had attained its greatest capacity, its congregations began to rapidly diminish. This was due to the formation of other religious societies. The number of regular members which in 1825 was two hundred and twenty-two, had fallen in 1833 to one hundred and seventy-three, and the audiences had decreased correspondingly. Besides those who had withdrawn to form new organizations of other denominations, there began, in the year last named, a farther exodus of members to form the West Concord society. This was followed by another in 1837, to lay the foundations of the South society. These had reduced its membership in 1841 to one hundred and five. The next year, the East Concord members left and formed the Congregational society in that village. Thus, quartered and diminished in its membership more than one half, we can readily see that the remnant, with its families, was insufficient to fill the great structure of which it now found itself the sole possessor.

Its fifty great windows, each with its forty panes of glass, looked more staring than ever before, and rattled, when the wind blew, as they had never rattled before. The voice of the minister reverberated through the vast area, and his eye sought in vain, upon the floor and in the galleries, the dense ranks of men, women and children, numbering some ten or twelve hundred, which had been wont to greet him.

We are not, therefore, surprised to find, as we turn over the well kept records of the society, that there came one day (March 17, 1841), before a meeting of its members, a proposition to leave the old sanctuary and build a new and smaller one. This, after long consultations and various delays, caused in part by differences of preference as to location, resulted in the erection of our third meeting-house, at the corner of Main and Washington streets.

But before leaving the old house for the new one, the members of the several societies which, from time to time, had gone out therefrom, met within its con-

secrated walls, and, after prayer, and song, and pleasant reminiscences, bade it farewell forever.¹

This imperfect sketch would be still more so should I neglect a passing allusion to some of the assemblies, other than religious, convened from time to time in our second meeting-house.

As early as 1778, a convention was here holden to form a plan of government for the state of New Hampshire.

The first time the legislature ever met in Concord, March 13, 1782, it assembled in this house.² Owing, however, to the cold, it adjourned for that session to another building temporarily prepared for its accommodation.³ From the year 1782, onward to 1790, when our first town-house was built, were held in our second meeting-house no less than fifteen sessions of the General Court.

The adjournment, just alluded to, suggests the fact that for two centuries after coming to this country, our New England ancestors had no fires in their sanctuaries. They accepted the weather as God sent it and were content. If in summer, the sun shining through great unshaded windows, dazzled their eyes, they contracted their eyebrows and bore it, either with winking or without, as individual preferences suggested. If in winter the cold in God's house was intense, they shrugged their shoulders, worked their toes, and, so far as they could, got carnal warmth from the fervor of their devotions. But it must have been very chilly for the ungodly on such occasions. That at the noon intermission such should have sought spiritual invigoration at Hanaford's Tavern near by, may have been inexcusable, but it was not inconsistent with the native depravity of that time.

Means of warming were introduced into the old North meeting-house in 1821.⁴ A moderate sized box-stove was placed in the broad aisle, which had a very long funnel, which was taken through the ceiling to a very short chimney in the attic.

This central warmer proved but partially satisfactory, and may have operated like a similar one in the meeting-house of another town, which was said

¹ "Previous to leaving the old North meeting-house as a place of public worship, a union meeting of the four Congregational churches in town was held in it. The meeting was attended two successive days, viz.: Thursday 27th and Friday 28th of September, in which the several pastors took part, viz.: Rev. Asa P. Tenney of the West church; Rev. Daniel J. Noyes of the South church; Rev. Timothy Morgan, preacher at East church; and the pastor of the First church. In the forenoon of Friday, the pastor preached a discourse on reminiscences of the old meeting-house. In the afternoon, about five hundred and fifty communicants, belonging to the four -lister churches, sat down to the Lord's Supper. It was a season of tender and affecting interest. Many wept at the thought of a separation from the place where they and their fathers had so long worshipped."—*Bouton's History of Concord*, page 452.

² The General Assembly, in session at Exeter, voted on the twelfth day of January, 1782, "That when the business of this session is finished, the General Court be adjourned to meet at Concord, at such time as shall be agreed upon by the said General Court."—*Provincial Papers*, vol. 8, page 930.

The tradition is that Col. Timothy Walker, then a member of the House from Concord, remarked to some of the members who were complaining of the treatment which they had received at their boarding-houses, that if the General Assembly would hold its next session at Concord they should be as well accommodated as at Exeter and for half the money. Thereupon the Assembly adjourned to Concord.

Upon his return home, the Colonel informed his neighbors of his promise and the consequences thereof; and that at its next session all must open their houses for the accommodation of the members of the General Court. This they at once agreed to do, and subsequently did, to general satisfaction. Since then, forty-four sessions of the General Court have been held in Concord, up to 1816, when it became the capital of the state.

³ The hall fitted up for this occasion was in the second story of the house now standing on the west side of Main street, next north of the house of Enoch Gerrish. At that time, it stood upon the east side of the street and a few rods south of its present location.

⁴ As I can never forget the faces within, so I never can the furious winds which howled about the ancient pile, the cold by which it was penetrated, and the stamping of men and women when within the porches, as they came from afar, and went direct from their sleighs to an immense apartment in which there was no fire, except that carried thither in foot-stoves. The rattling of a multitude of loose windows, my tingling feet, the breath of people seen across the house, as the smoke of chimneys is discerned on frosty mornings, the impatience of the congregation, and the rapidity of their dispersion,—are they not all upon the memory of those who worshipped in that house previous to the year 1821? Then my father suggested that in winter there be only one service, which led to the purchase of a moderate-sized box-stove, and its erection half way up the central aisle. This, strange as it may seem, was a departure from old custom which encountered some opposition.—*Biography and Recollections by Asa McFarland*, page 104.

to have driven all the cold air from the middle of the house to the sides, rendering the wall pews more uncomfortable than ever before. The introduction of a stove into a meeting-house often met great opposition and caused serious commotion. The excitement raised by the setting up of a stove in the meeting-house at Webster, in 1832, was quieted only by a general agreement, embodied in a vote passed at a regular meeting of the society, "to dispense with a fire in the stove the first Sabbath in each month through the cold season."¹

Before the introduction of the stove, many among the more delicate portion of the congregation had sought a slight mitigation of the frosts in God's house by the use of "foot-stoves." These continued in quite general use so long as our society worshipped in this house. The heat of such a warmer came from a pan of coals inclosed in a box of tin. No man here present, who was a boy forty or fifty years ago, will ever forget the Sunday labor imposed upon him in cold weather by the filling and carrying back and forth of one of these. The stern fathers of the previous generation may, very likely, have regarded them as vanities, and this Sunday labor as unnecessary and sinful. To this good Puritan opinion, I doubt not that the boys who had mastered the catechism, and the families in the immediate vicinity of the meeting-house levied upon for coals, would have readily assented.

It was in our second meeting-house that the New Hampshire State Convention was holden, on the 21st day of June, 1788, which, as the ninth assembled for that purpose, ratified the Federal Constitution and started upon its glorious career the government of the United States. In this house was also held the conventions of 1791-2, to revise the constitution of the state.

Fourteen times from 1784 to 1806 did the legislature march in formal procession to this house, to hear the annual election sermon, which preceded its organization, and every year afterwards, until 1831, when the sermon was discontinued. Thirty-nine of all the election sermons preached before the legislature of New Hampshire were delivered in this house, and three of them by pastors of this church.²

From 1765 to 1790, a period of twenty-five years, all annual and special town-meetings were held in this meeting-house. Here our townsmen, many of whom rarely, if ever, met on other occasions except for divine worship, assembled to exchange friendly greetings and discharge their civil duties as American citizens. Here, also, protracted religious meetings were held from time to time, the most memorable of which was that of 1831. Here important addresses were delivered to large assemblies on fourth of July and other occasions of general interest. Here in 1835 was delivered before the General Court a eulogy on Gen. Lafayette, by Nathaniel G. Upham. Here were held conventions for the promotion of temperance. Here occurred, in 1834 and 1835, the memorable trials of Abraham Prescott, for the murder of Mrs. Sally Cochran, of Pembroke. Here was had that sharp political encounter between Franklin Pierce and John P. Hale upon the latter's leaving the Democratic party in 1845. The walls of no other house in New Hampshire resounded to so many lofty flights of eloquence as did those of our second meeting-house, from 1751 to 1842.

A few years after its abandonment, this ancient structure was sought by the trustees of the Methodist General Biblical Institute as the seat of that institution, which it was proposed to remove from Newbury, Vermont, to this city. This society and the pewholders cheerfully conveyed to them their several interests in the building and lot, and public-spirited citizens of Concord subscribed some three thousand dollars for so remodelling the house as to suit the new

1 Coffin's History of Boscawen and Webster, page 238.

2 The election sermon was preached by our second pastor, Rev. Israel Evans, in 1791; by our third pastor, Rev. Dr. Asa McFarland, in 1803; and by our fourth pastor, Rev. Dr. Nathaniel Bouton, in 1828.

purpose to which it was to be devoted. The pulpit, pews and galleries were removed; a second floor was introduced, and the two stories, thereby secured, were divided into dormitories and lecture rooms.¹ It continued the seat of the institute until its removal to Boston, when, in accordance with terms of its conveyance, twenty years before, it reverted, with the land upon which it stood, to the First Congregational Society of Concord. It was subsequently sold to private parties, and the proceeds of its sale were devoted to the purchase of the society's parsonage. With sad hearts its many friends afterward saw it degraded to a tenement house of a low order. But its desecration was brief. On the night of Monday, November 28th, 1870, the purifying angel wrapped a mantle of flame about it and transported it heavenward upon a chariot of fire.

Not long afterwards the Union School District purchased the site of it, and reared thereon one of the fairest school-houses of which this, or any other New Hampshire town, can boast. It bears upon its south facade a tablet with the following inscription:

WALKER SCHOOL.

ON THIS SPOT,
CONSECRATED TO RELIGION AND LEARNING,
WAS ERECTED IN 1751,
THE FIRST FRAMED MEETING-HOUSE
IN CONCORD,
WHICH WAS USED FOR NINETY-ONE YEARS
AS A PLACE OF WORSHIP BY
THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY
OF THE TOWN,
AND WITHIN WHOSE WALLS ASSEMBLED
IN 1788
THE NINTH STATE CONVENTION WHICH RATIFIED
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.
FROM 1847 TO 1867
IT WAS OCCUPIED BY
THE METHODIST GENERAL BIBLICAL INSTITUTE.
BURNED IN 1870,
ITS SITE WAS PURCHASED BY
THE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT,
WHICH HAS CAUSED TO BE ERECTED
THEREON THIS STRUCTURE,
A. D. 1873.

¹ A portion of the pulpit is in possession of the New Hampshire Historical Society.

OUR THIRD MEETING-HOUSE.

1842-1873.

Our third meeting-house was a less imposing edifice than our second one. The diminished membership of the society called for a smaller house of worship. Rarely before, and never since, has its pecuniary ability been less than at that time. The general drift of population also demanded a more southerly location. But many had a strong attachment to the old spot and to the old sanctuary. Some, therefore, proposed the remodelling of the latter, while others suggested the erection of a new house upon the site of it. But the majority opinion favored both a new location and a new house. Two subscription papers, which were then circulated, indicate the preferences of different members of the society. That for a new house upon the old lot, dated November 20th, 1841, contains the names of forty-three persons, subscribing for eighty-two shares.¹ The other, dated April 7, 1842, for a new house at the corner of Main and Washington streets had upon it the names of thirty-nine signers, agreeing to take one hundred and three shares.²

After repeated meetings and protracted deliberations, the new location was adopted. The deed of it to Nathaniel Abbot, Shadrack Seavey, James Buswell, James Moulton, Jr., and Jonathan E. Lang, the committee to build the new house, bears date May 16, 1842. The sum paid for it was thirteen hundred dollars.

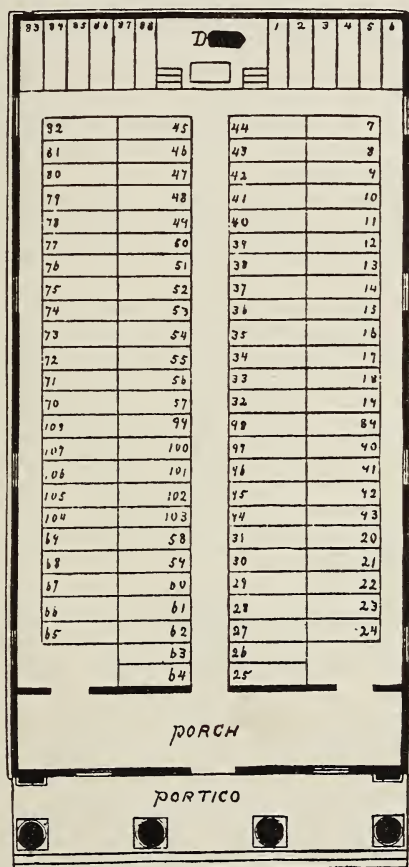
The plan of our third meeting-house was in general conformity to the style of such structures then prevailing in New England. It was of one story with a bell-tower and steeple forming a part of the façade. It faced the east and was eighty feet in length and fifty feet in width. It had long, square-topped windows upon the sides and a slightly projecting porch in front, whose roof rested upon four plain, round columns, some twenty-five feet high. The corner-stone was laid and the frame raised July 4, 1842. It was dedicated on the twenty-third day of November of the same year. When completed, it was a comely enough

1 This subscription paper read as follows, viz.: "We the undersigned, inhabitants of Concord, believing that the interests and future prosperity of the First Congregational Society in Concord requires the erection of a new house for public worship, do hereby agree to aid in the erection of a new house of worship for said society by taking the number of shares set against our names respectively, and pay the sum of fifty dollars for each and every share we may have subscribed for to a committee, hereafter to be chosen by the subscribers, for the purpose of purchasing materials and making all necessary contracts for the erection of a new house of worship. The house to be located on land now owned by said society and the same on which the house now occupied by said society now stands. Concord, Nov. 20, 1841.

SUBSCRIBERS' NAMES AND NUMBER OF SHARES.—Abial Walker, 10; F. N. Fisk, 10; R. Bradley, 6; S. Coffin, 4; Nath. Abbott, 4; R. E. Pecker, 2; Jona. E. Lang, 2; Sarah A. Virgin, 1; Samuel Herbert, 2; Albert Herbert, 1; Ezra Ballard, 1; Nathan Ballard, 2; John Flanders, 1; Eben Fisk, 1; Abira Fisk, 1; Samuel Morrill, 2; Daniel Knowlton, 1; D. N. Hoyt, 2; L. Roby, 2; James Woolson, 1; Ivory Hall, 1; James Buswell, 1; Lawrence Cooledge, 1; Benja. Farnum, 2; Shadrack Seavey, 2; Jacob Flanders, 1; Moses Shute, 1; John Corlis, 1; Isaac Proctor, 1; Joseph S. Abbot, 1; Nathan K. Abbot, 1. Whole number of shares, 69." Amount, \$3,450.00. Original on file in Society archives.

2 Upon this paper were the following names and number of shares, viz.: "Samuel Coffin, 8 shares; Richard Bradley, 10; F. N. Fisk, 4; Nath. Abbot, 5; J. E. Lang, 4; S. Seavey, 4; Samuel Morrill, 4; James Buswell, 3; R. E. Pecker, 4; D. N. Hoyt, 2; James Woolson, 3; J. Cooledge, 3; S. Herbert, 2; N. Bouton, 4; B. Whitney, 2; E. Hall, 1; E. Philbrick, 1; Albert Herbert, 2; Ivory Hall, 1; Joseph Low, 2; J. C. Ordway, 1; Mary A. Stickney, 2; Danl. Knowlton, 1; B. Farnum, 4; D. A. Hill, 2; Porter Blanchard, 2; Jno. Eastman, 1; Sarah Kimball, 1; Joshua Sanborn, 1; G. W. Ela, 1; A. Fowler, 1; H. M. Moore, 3; Sewell Hoyt, 3; James Buswell for C. A. Davis, 6; Ira Perley, 1; Franklin Pierce, 1; Mary C. Herbert, 1; Jos. Eastman, 2. Whole number shares, 103." Original on file in Society archives.

structure of wood, in a ubiquitous coating of white paint, which, we are happy to know, is no longer the only orthodox color for an orthodox meeting-house. It had an audience room seventy feet long, forty-eight and a half feet wide, and twenty-four feet high. A broad aisle extended through the middle of it, from the vestibule to the pulpit, and there was one of a less width, but of the same length, next to the north and south walls. The singing gallery was over the vestibule. Its length corresponded with the width of the church. It was ten feet deep and about fourteen feet high. The pulpit was a neat, mahogany structure.¹ On each each side of it was a single tier of pews extending to the wall. In front of it were four tiers. The whole number of pews was eighty-eight, affording about four hundred and fifty sittings. The following floor plan shows the arrangement of pews, aisles and vestibule :



FLOOR PLAN OF OUR THIRD MEETING-HOUSE.

In 1848 this house was enlarged by an addition of fifteen feet at the west end. This gave room for twenty additional pews and raised its seating capacity to about six hundred. A little later, its glaring white walls were frescoed, and the blaze of the sun through the windows was softened by the introduction of inside blinds. On the front of the gallery was a round-faced clock, which rarely kept

¹ This, which was made by Porter Blanchard and Sons, was a few years since given to the East Concord Congregational society and is still in use.

the ninth commandment, and fortunately was visible only to the minister, except during the singing, when the congregation arose, turned their backs to the pulpit, and "faced the music."

Until the formation of the South Congregational Society, in 1837, evening religious meetings were held in the town hall. After the withdrawal of persons belonging to that society, this room was found too large for such meetings and they were ere long transferred to rooms in the Merrimack County Bank building, now belonging to the New Hampshire Historical Society. These, however, proved as much too small as the town-hall had been too large, and the want of a suitable chapel became so imperative that, on the fourteenth day of March, 1855, the pastor, Dr. Bouton, addressed to the society a communication setting forth its importance and tendering a subscription of fifty dollars towards its erection. About the same time the Ladies' Sewing Circle sent another, tendering a contribution of four hundred and fifty dollars for the same object.

In response to these generous offers, the society passed a suitable vote of thanks; but no decisive action upon the subject was taken until its annual meeting on the seventeenth of March, 1858. At this time Shadrack Seavey, Dr. Ezra Carter and Moses H. Bradley were made a committee "to consider the subject of providing a vestry for the accommodation of the society and to report at an adjourned meeting."

About a month later, on the 12th of April, 1858, another committee, previously appointed, reported that, "in their belief a vestry suitable for the use of the society can be erected upon the land belonging to the society in rear of the church."

On the twenty-sixth of the same month, Leonard Holt, for the last committee, submitted a plan for a chapel, which was approved, and the committee were directed "to circulate papers and obtain subscriptions for the building."

The committee were so far successful that, on the 31st of May following, they, together with the prudential committee of the society, were directed to proceed to its location and erection upon the west part of the church lot. The work was at once commenced and prosecuted to completion in the autumn of 1858. It was dedicated, soon after, by appropriate services to the uses for which it was intended. On that occasion the pastor expressed a hope that extemporaneous speech might prevail within its walls, and that written discourses might attract attention by their absence only.

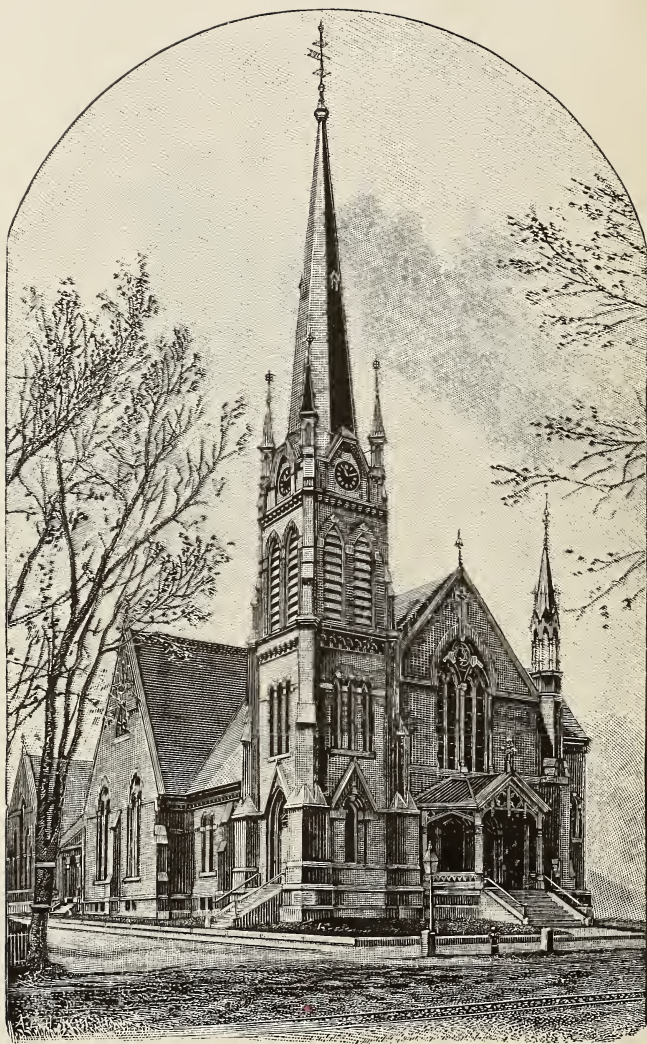
It became too small for us ere long, and was enlarged by an addition to the north end, which affords a kitchen and dining-room, for use on social occasions. In June, 1873, it came near meeting the fate of our third meeting-house, and was partially burned. But it was subsequently repaired, and is in active service still.

In 1855, largely through the efforts of Mr. Reuben L. Foster, a subscription of nearly fifteen hundred dollars (\$1,467.10) was made, by members of the society, to provide for the meeting-house a steeple clock, and to inclose its lot upon the east and south sides by a stone and iron fence.

Some years later (1869), upon the introduction of a new organ, the singer's gallery was lowered and remodelled, the audience room was ventilated, the pews were repainted, and the walls and ceilings frescoed anew.

By these alterations and repairs the interior of our third meeting-house was made both convenient and agreeable. It continued without further change until the morning of Sunday, June 29th, 1873, when, like its predecessor, it was seized by devouring flames and translated.¹

¹ The fire was communicated to the meeting-house from the carriage shops of Mr. Samuel M. Griffin, near by upon the north, which had been fired by an insane person possessed with the idea of clearing a site at the corner of Main and Washington streets for a splendid Spiritual temple. He was soon after arrested and committed to the Asylum for the Insane.



OUR FOURTH MEETING-HOUSE.

OUR FOURTH MEETING-HOUSE.

1874.

The pulpit, with some other furniture of the church which had escaped the flames, was removed, soon after daylight, to the city hall. Here the society worshipped that day, and had a temporary home until March, 1876, when this, our fourth meeting-house, was ready for occupancy.

On the evening of the day following that of the fire (June 29, 1873), an informal meeting of the society, fully attended, was held at the City Hall to consider the existing situation, and to take such action in relation thereto as might be deemed advisable. While the meeting was in some degree a sad one, there were apparent no signs of despondency. After prayer by the pastor, the former pastor, Dr. Bouton, venerable in years and strong in the affections of the people, arose and said, "Let us rise up and build," and all the people responded, "Amen!" The resolutions, which he offered, deploring the loss of our third meeting-house and pledging the society to the erection of a new one, passed without a dissenting vote.¹ The keynote was struck, and the settled purpose of the people was expressed.

Immediately afterwards a committee was raised to investigate the title to the lot upon which the late meeting-house had stood, and to suggest a scheme for raising means for the erection of a new one, with instructions to report at a legal meeting to be called as soon as possible.²

At the same time, another was appointed to procure plans and estimates of the cost of a new house of worship.³

At a legal meeting, duly called and holden some three weeks later (July 21), the action of the informal meeting, just mentioned, was confirmed, and it was "Voted unanimously that we rebuild upon the old site, if no legal disabilities be found." It was also decided that the money arising from insurance of the organ be set aside and used, when needed, in the purchase of a new one.⁴

The question as to the location of the contemplated house gave rise to considerable discussion, but the prevalent opinion favored building upon the old lot. A difficulty, however, presented itself in the fact, that the title of the lot was found to be not in the society but in the pew holders of the old house, who

¹ "Resolved that we deeply deplore the destruction by fire on the morning of Sunday, the twenty-ninth instant, of the beautiful house in which we and our fathers have worshipped during the period of an entire generation."

"Resolved that while we humbly acknowledge the providence of God in this great loss, we gratefully acknowledge the many blessings conferred on us as a church and religious society; and, trusting still in Him, resolve with united hearts to arise and build another edifice for His worship and to the honor of His name."—*Society Records*, Vol. 3, page 80.

² "Voted that a committee of three be appointed to examine into and report at a future time in regard to the question of pew-holder's title to the land on which the house stood. Messrs. J. B. Walker, Enoch Gerrish and Sylvester Dana were appointed said committee."

"The best means to be adopted for procuring the means to erect the proposed new house of worship was referred to Messrs. J. B. Walker, Gerrish and Dana, with instructions to report on the same at the next regular meeting of the society."—*Society Records*, Vol. 3, page 84.

³ This committee, which consisted originally of Shadrach Seavey, M. H. Bradley and James Hazelton, was subsequently enlarged by the addition of William G. Carter, Benjamin S. Warren, Edward A. Moulton, Joseph B. Walker, Abner C. Holt, John Abbot, Samuel S. Kimball, Isaac N. Abbot, George F. Page, and Mark R. Holt.—*Society Records*, Vol. 3, page 85.

⁴ On motion of Dr. William G. Carter, it was "Voted that the insurance money on the organ, when received, be set apart and kept intact for the purchase of a new organ, and that it be placed in the hands of the Financial Agent of the society."—*Society Records*, Vol. 3, page 86.

severally had in it an undivided interest proportioned to the original values of their pews. Some of these were not members of the society and felt no special interest in the erection of a new house. Those who contemplated doing so were unwilling to build upon land to which they had no title. This embarrassment was finally removed by a transfer by the former pew-owners, for nominal considerations, of their several interests in the lot to the First Congregational Society in Concord. Nearly all signed the conveyance¹ which bears date

1 Know all men by these presents, that we, the subscribers, chiefly of Concord in the county of Merrimack and State of New Hampshire, proprietors of pews in the meeting-house recently occupied by the First Congregational Society in Concord, and owners of the lot of land in said Concord on which said house was situated, in consideration of one cent and of other valuable considerations, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, do hereby remise, release, and forever quitclaim unto the First Congregational Society in Concord, a legal corporation, our respective undivided shares in the said lot of land appurtenant to and equal to the proportioned value of the pews in said house, according to the original appraisal thereof, whose numbers are prefixed to our respective names; which said lot is bounded easterly 85 feet by Main street, southerly 200 feet by Washington street, westerly 100 feet and northerly 198 feet, by lands of Samuel M. Griffin.

To have and to hold the same, with all the privileges and appurtenances to the same belonging, to the said society, its successors and assigns forever; provide, however, that this deed shall not take effect until the proprietors of at least seventy-two pews in said house shall have executed the same; and provided further that the said society, within two months after the delivery to it of this deed, shall execute and deliver to an association of persons who may then undertake to erect a new house of worship on said lot, a lease of the same, for a nominal rent and for such period of time as said house may remain upon said premises.

In testimony whereof we hereunto set our hands and affix our seal this eleventh day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-three.

Signed, sealed, and delivered in presence of us:

[SEAL.]

B. S. Warren, I. N. Abbott.	No.	35.	J. B. Walker.
M. H. Farnum, Charles C. Neal.		77.	Chas. P. Blanchard.
P. H. Larkin, Caleb Brown.	23, 39,	65.	F. A. Fisk.
P. H. Larkin, Caleb Brown.	24, 43,	97.	Moses H. Bradley.
J. M. Hoyt, S. M. Hurd.	11,	12.	Rebecca A. Davis.
Caroline B. Roby, Luther Roby.		9.	Mary Ann Roby.
Abby H. Sweetser, Ada J. Clark.		52.	H. P. Sweetser.
Henry S. Dunlap, S. E. Straw.		108.	Andrew Bunker.
Byron Moore, C. T. Huntoon.		$\frac{1}{2}$ 71.	Geo. H. Marston.
Mary E. Lang, M. H. Bradley.	48,	59.	Clara P. Morrill.
Frances M. Abbot, W. S. Abbot.		102.	John Abbot.
John C. Thorn, M. H. Bradley.		95.	Calvin Thorn.
A. J. Herbert, M. H. Bradley.		32.	Nancy B. Herbert.
H. Campbell, J. D. Johnson.		103.	J. C. Tilton.
Mrs. J. E. Lang, Ella S. Lang.	30,	76.	Mary E. West.
Almira Silsby, Mrs. C. F. Stewart.		49.	Emeline A. Pecker.
Charles A. Robinson, Mrs. C. F. Stewart.		37.	Fannie P. Robinson.
Helen P. Stearns, Moses H. Bradley.		15.	L. A. Walker.
Moses H. Bradley, M. O. Gerrish.		53.	Enoch Gerrish.
Hattie E. Carter, Moses H. Bradley.		33.	Ezra Carter.
Hattie E. Carter, Moses H. Bradley.		63.	W. G. Carter.
Warren E. Freeman, M. H. Bradley.		101.	J. H. Stewart.
E. A. Moulton, Mrs. M. C. Moulton.		82.	B. S. Moulton.
S. R. Moulton, Mrs. M. C. Moulton.		107.	E. A. Moulton.
C. F. Nichols, E. A. Moulton.		56.	A. M. Grant.
Chas. P. Hoyt, E. A. Moulton.		51.	C. W. Moore.
Edna A. Bean, E. A. Moulton.		54.	James Hazelton.
W. H. Pitman, W. Odlin.	57 &	70.	Daniel A. Hill.
Geo. D. B. Prescott, C. R. Greenough.		14.	Charles E. Ballard.
Sarah E. Jones, M. H. Bradley.		34.	Harriet F. Coffin.
D. S. Palmer, M. H. Bradley.		45.	Sylvester Dana.
J. B. Walker, C. F. Stewart.		1.	G. W. Ela.
B. S. Warren, Butler Jones.		8.	Mrs. J. C. Ordway.
S. F. Buswell, C. F. Stewart.			Mrs. J. D. Buswell.
C. F. Stewart, H. Campbell.			Lowell Brown.
H. Campbell, Isaac N. Abbot.		98.	Charles F. Stewart.
Jeremiah S. Abbot, Isaac N. Abbot.		19.	Daniel Knowlton.
Isaac N. Abbot, Lucia A. Flanders.		5.	Jacob N. Flanders.
N. K. Abbot, I. N. Abbot.		106.	Albert Saltmarsh.
John Ballard, I. N. Abbot.		78.	Daniel Farnum.
David Farnum, I. N. Abbot.		13.	John Ballard.
Joseph S. Abbot, E. A. Flanders.		17.	Esther Abbot.
C. P. Blanchard, Laura Roby.		29.	Mrs. W. Roby.
N. J. Guild, C. P. Blanchard.		99.	Anne A. Kimball.
Fanny Kittredge, C. P. Blanchard.		94.	Mrs. J. Kittredge.
C. P. Blanchard, George Simonds.		7.	David Simonds.
L. W. Durgin, C. P. Blanchard.		80.	John Burgum.
E. H. Paige, Chas. P. Blanchard.		100.	Cyrus W. Paige.
M. J. Utley, C. P. Blanchard.		6.	Samuel Utley.
John C. Thorn, Chas. P. Blanchard.		96.	Andrew S. Smith.
B. S. Warren, John C. Thorn.	4 pews.		Benjamin Farnum.
Mrs. Mary C. Gove, J. B. Walker.		61.	Sylvester Dana.
Chas. R. Walker, Abby H. Jones.	5-18	75.	William Abbot.
Chas. R. Walker, Clara E. Chase.	5-18	75.	Moses B. Abbot.

August 11, 1873, and thereby the lot became the property of the society, which subsequently, June 1, 1874, executed a lease of the same to the pew owners of the present house during the period of its continuance.¹

The duties devolved upon the committee appointed to present a plan for a new house proved onerous and perplexing. The subject interested every member of the society, and the ideas in regard to it were as various as they were vague. Two plans carefully matured were rejected. As time was passing and little progress making, some signs of impatience were occasionally shown, but it

John W. Ford, Chas. P. Blanchard.	No.	46.	W. P. Ford.
C. P. Blanchard, C. A. Woolson.		40.	M. C. Herbert.
M. C. Herbert, C. P. Blanchard.	73 &	85.	C. A. Woolson.
A. M. Kelly, E. A. Moulton.		88.	Harriet N. Hook.
M. F. Moore, C. W. Moore.		38.	H. M. Moore.
John C. Thorn, B. S. Warren.		42.	Sylvester Dana.
John C. Thorn, B. S. Warren.		44.	Sylvester Dana.
Sylvester Dana, Mary C. Colby.	8-10	75.	Phebe C. Lund.
O. L. Shepard, M. H. Bradley.		3.	Joseph Eastman.
C. F. Stewart, J. B. Walker.		10.	Dorcas M. Stickney.
S. H. Stevens, Sylvester Dana.		39.	Sarah E. Hamilton.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.
MERRIMACK SS. SEPTEMBER, 1873.

Personally appeared the above named Joseph B. Walker, Charles P. Blanchard, Moses H. Bradley, Andrew Bunker, George H. Marston, William G. Carter, Edward A. Moulton, Charles W. Moore, Charles E. Ballard, Charles F. Stewart, Daniel Farnum, John Ballard, Benjamin Farnum, Enoch Gerrish, Calvin Thorn, Francis A. Fisk, and Phebe C. Lund, and July 22, 1874, Sarah E. Hamilton, and severally acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be their voluntary act and deed.

Before me,

SYLVESTER DANA, Justice of the Peace.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.
MERRIMACK SS. SEPTEMBER, 1873.

Personally appeared the above named Mary E. West, Emeline A. Pecker, Fannie P. Robinson, Rebecca A. Davis, Henry P. Sweetser, Cyrus W. Paige, Judith D. Buswell, Daniel A. Hill, Lowell Brown, Ezra Carter, Harriet N. Hook, J. Kirtledge, John Burgum, Clara P. Morrill, John Abbot, Anne A. Kimball, Andrew S. Smith, William P. Ford, Nancy B. Herbert, David Simonds, Joseph C. Tilton, W. Roby, George W. Ela, Dorcas M. Stickney and Mary C. Herbert, J. C. Ordway, Charlotte A. Woolson and Henry M. Moore, and severally acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be their voluntary act and deed. Before me,

CHAS. F. STEWART, Justice of the Peace.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.
MERRIMACK SS. SEPTEMBER, 1873.

Personally appeared the above named Mary Ann Roby, Lyman A. Walker, Betsey S. Moulton, Andrew M. Grant, James Hazelton, Daniel Knowlton, Harriet F. Coffin, Jacob N. Flanders, Albert Saltmarsh, Esther Abbot, Samuel Utley, William Abbot, Joseph Eastman, Sylvester Dana and John H. Stewart and acknowledged the foregoing instrument by them subscribed to be their voluntary act and deed. Before me,

MOSES H. BRADLEY, Justice of the Peace.

1 "Know all men by these presents, that the First Congregational Society in Concord, in the County of Merrimack, and State of New Hampshire, by Abner C. Holt, George F. Page and John C. Thorn, the prudential committee of said society, duly authorized and empowered, for and in consideration of the sum of one dollar paid to said society by Joseph B. Walker and others, of Concord aforesaid, signers of a certain agreement or articles of association for the erection of a meeting-house for the use of persons worshipping with said society, do hereby lease to the said Walker and others, the lot of land situate at the junction of Main and Washington streets in Concord aforesaid, bounded easterly 85 feet by Main street, southerly 200 feet by Washington street, westerly 106 feet and northerly 198 feet by lands of Samuel M. Griffin.

To have and to hold the same with all the privileges and appurtenances to the same belonging, to him and them, the said Walker and others, their heirs and assigns, in trust for the pew owners in said contemplated meeting-house, their heirs and assigns, for and during such period as said meeting-house shall stand and remain upon said premises, at the expiration of which said premises shall revert to the said First Congregational Society in Concord; excepting and reserving from the operation of this lease so much of said premises as contains the chapel thereon, and also so much as may be necessary for the erection of any other chapel with its appurtenances hereafter upon the said premises.

In witness whereof we hereunto set our hands and affix our seals in behalf of said society, this first day of June, 1874.

Signed, sealed and delivered

in the presence of

G. H. MARSTON.
SYLVESTER DANA.

ABNER C. HOLT,
GEORGE F. PAGE,
JOHN C. THORN.

{ L.S. } Prudential Committee
of said society.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.
MERRIMACK SS. JUNE 1, 1874.

Personally appeared the above named Abner C. Holt, George F. Page and John C. Thorn and acknowledged the foregoing instrument by them subscribed, to be their voluntary act and deed.

Before me,

SYLVESTER DANA, Justice of the Peace."
Society Archives,

was not until two months or more after their appointment that the committee were able to offer to the society a design which was satisfactory to all.

On the ninth of September they presented a report recommending a modified gothic, cruciform, brick church, with a principal facade upon Main street, having a bell-tower and spire upon the southeast corner, and an organ loft at the west end, with an audience room of sufficient capacity to seat six hundred persons; to be built for a sum not exceeding twenty-five thousand dollars.¹ These points met with general favor, and were shortly afterward embodied in general floor plans and elevations by Mr. A. P. Cutting, architect, of Worcester, Mass.

But one of the seven fundamental points given him the architect failed to secure in his design—the cost limit of \$25,000.

When, therefore, on the ninth of March, 1874, the committee on plans and estimates reported the estimated cost of the structure proposed as thirty-two thousand dollars, there was manifest a general feeling of despondency. It was thought that so large a sum could not possibly be raised. At the same time, it was the almost universal feeling that the design proposed must not be relinquished or materially altered.

At that particular time the position of the committee on plans and means was not an enviable one. On one side they saw figures, based upon careful estimates, as inexorable as fate, reading \$32,000. On the other the general determination of the society to have the meeting-house of their choice, whether it could be paid for or not.

However, it has ever been a fortunate characteristic of this old society that its membership has been a happily united one. It has always been able to concentrate whatever of pecuniary or other strength it had upon points unanimously acceptable. While its faith in its own powers has been modest, it has always been abiding. The shock caused by the figures above referred to was but brief.

At a society meeting held three weeks after their announcement, when the subscription for the new house had reached the sum of (\$19,250) nineteen thousand two hundred and fifty dollars, the venerable Dr. Ezra Carter, who had been deeply interested in the enterprise from the beginning, arose, and with flashing eye proposed in nervous tones that, "when the subscription shall amount to (\$22,500) twenty-two thousand five hundred dollars, the building committee shall proceed immediately to make contracts for the erection of the church."² The proposal was adopted, and the culminating point in the undertaking was passed.

Contracts were soon afterwards executed and the work advanced with such rapidity that the foundations were completed and ready for the corner-stone on the twenty-fifth day of July, 1874. This was laid with appropriate services of exhortation, prayer and song, on the afternoon of that day. God's people, emerging from the wilderness upon the banks of the Jordan, did not contemplate with greater joy the "sweet fields beyond the swelling flood," than did this people then see in imagination rising before them the walls and roof which shelter us to-day.

The work progressed with such rapidity as secured the erection of the walls,

¹ "Report of the committee on 'Plans and Estimates,' reported through J. B. Walker, Esq.

The points decided on by the committee were as follows:

- 1st. That it be a brick church.
- 2d. To face Main street.
- 3d. To have a tower and spire on S. E. corner.
- 4th. That it be cruciform in shape.
- 5th. To seat about six hundred on floor.
- 6th. To cost \$25,000.
- 7th. That the organ be in rear of pulpit.

On motion of Charles E. Ballard, and seconded by Charles F. Stewart—

Voted that the report be accepted and approved, and that the committee be allowed to modify the same at their discretion."—*Society Records, Vol. 3, page 91.*

² *Society Records, Vol. 3, page 106.*

roof, bell-tower and spire by the close of the autumn of that year (1874). The money raised, amounting to nearly twenty-five thousand dollars (\$24,875) just sufficed for their completion, and the building was closed for the winter.

A careful estimate, subsequently made, of the cost of finishing the interior, showed clearly the necessity of a farther subscription of ten thousand dollars. Every one had already paid as much as he had intended to give, but, realizing the importance of completing the work, and entertaining a wholesome dread of incurring a society debt, the subscribers came forward with supplementary promises exceeding by a thousand dollars that amount.¹ This sufficed to substantially

1 The subscription paper for the erection of this house embodied eleven articles of mutual agreement, and was as follows, viz.:

"We, the undersigned, subscribers for the purpose of erecting a meeting-house on the lot of land situate at the junction of Main and Washington streets in Concord, New Hampshire, for the use of persons attending religious worship with the First Congregational Society in Concord, hereby mutually covenant and agree to and with each other to pay the several sums set against our respective names to Francis A. Fisk, George H. Marston and Isaac N. Abbot, appointed for this purpose, such subscriptions to be subject to the terms and conditions following, to wit:

First. A lease of the interest of the Society in said lot of land, for a nominal consideration is to be executed by said Society, within two months from the time when this agreement shall become binding, to the subscribers hereto, in trust for the pew-owners in said house, their heirs and assigns, for the period during which said house may stand thereon.

Second. The payments of said subscription are to be made, one fourth on the fifteenth day of February, one fourth on the first day of May, one fourth on the fifteenth day of July, and one fourth on the first day of October, 1874, and notes given therefor when this subscription shall have become binding, payable to said Fisk, Marston and Abbot, or their order, to be held by them in trust for the purposes aforesaid, and the avails thereof are to be expended agreeably to the directions and on the written draft of the building committee, consisting of Shadrach Seavey, Mark R. Holt and Samuel S. Kimball, which committee is authorized to construct said house.

Third. The pews in said house are to be appraised by the building committee, and the selection of the same is to be determined by bids for choice thereof at an auction, notice of which is to be given by said committee; and the amounts of their several subscriptions shall be allowed to the subscribers and taken by them in pews, at the valuations at which they may be severally appraised as aforesaid.

Fourth. All pews remaining on hand after a sum shall have been realized from this subscription and from the sale of pews sufficient to defray the expenses of erecting said house, with its appurtenances, the grading and fencing the lot, shall become the property of the Society and shall be rented by it, and the rents are to be appropriated: 1st. To the insurance of all the pews in said house. 2d. To any necessary repairs of said house, and 3d. To the general purposes of the Society; and any balance of money realized by this subscription, together with the choice money arising from the selection of pews more than may be necessary for the object of said subscription, shall be similarly appropriated.

Fifth. Meetings of the pew-holders may be held at any time, upon at least two weeks' notice, posted in each vestibule of the meeting-house and signed by any ten pew-holders.

Sixth. At a meeting of the pew-holders duly called and held for the purpose, and by a two thirds vote of those present (each pew representing one vote), consent may be given to the Society, or to other parties, to construct in said house galleries, the pews remaining unsold in which shall become the property of the Society after the expense of constructing such galleries shall have been defrayed, and the rents of such pews shall be appropriated in the same manner as the rents of other pews of the Society.

Seventh. At a like meeting and by a like vote, at any time after five years from the dedication of said house, the pews in said house may be made subject to assessment, according to their valuation by the Society, for the general running expenses of the Society; and also at a like meeting at any time, for the expense of effecting insurance upon said pews; and the Society in either case shall have a lien upon said pews for the payment of such assessments.

Eighth. At a like meeting at any time, and by a majority vote of the pew-holders present and voting (each pew representing one vote), said pews may be in like manner assessed for such repairs on said house as may become necessary.

Ninth. Bills of sale of the pews in said house, with all appropriate and necessary provisions, shall be executed by said Fisk, Marston and Abbot, the committee aforesaid, after the completion of said house and the selection of pews; and the said committee are to retain a lien on the several pews for the benefit of the subscribers until all amounts due upon them respectively are paid.

Tenth. Any vacancy occurring in the committees herein named shall be filled by the Society.

Eleventh. This agreement shall be binding only upon the subscribers when the aggregate of their subscriptions shall amount to twenty thousand and five hundred dollars.

And in conformity with the foregoing terms and conditions, we hereunto set our hands and affix our respective subscriptions.

Joseph B. Walker, \$2,000; Moses H. Bradley, \$1,000; Enoch Gerrish, \$1,000; E. and W. G. Carter, \$500; Mark R. Holt, \$500; H. Richardson, \$250; Charles P. Blanchard, \$200; Sylvester Dana, \$250; G. F. Page, \$250; S. Seavey, \$300; John Abbot, \$300; A. C. Holt, \$300; Daniel Farnum, \$250; Morrill Dunlap, \$300; S. S. Kimball, \$1,000; John Ballard, \$250; Charles E. Ballard, \$200; C. F. Stewart, \$150; F. A. Fisk, \$1,000; E. A. Pecker, \$500; J. and G. H. Marston, \$350; J. H. Stewart, \$200; C. W. Moore, \$200; C. S. Herbert, \$250; Calvin Smart, \$100; J. D. Bartley, \$150; Carin Thorn & Son, \$300; D. A. Hill, \$200; F. D. Ayer, \$200; Benjamin Farnum, \$500; G. H. Seavey, \$200; Mrs. Robert Davis, \$200; John H. Ballard, \$200; Albert Saltmarsh, \$200; Nancy B. Herbert, \$200; Mrs. C. A. Robinson, \$100; E. A. and S. R. Moulton, \$150; R. G. Morrison, \$150; Mrs. John Stickney, \$100; J. S. and I. N. Abbot, \$450; Jeremiah S. Abbot, \$150; Jacob N. Flanders, \$150; Andrew S. Smith, \$150; Oliver Pillsbury, \$200; John C. Pillsbury, \$200; N. Bouton, \$100; E. Jackman, \$300; Perry Kittredge, \$200; Mary F. Gibson, \$200; J. C. Tilton, \$100; The First Congregational Society of Concord, by John C. Thorn, clerk, \$1,000; George J. Sargent, \$500; A. M. Parker, \$100; C. A. Woolson, by M. C. Herbert, \$1,000; James C. Whittemore, \$50; Andrew Bunker, \$250; G. W. Emerton, \$250; First Congregational Sabbath School, by C. W. Moore, superintendent, \$400; William Abbot, \$200; M. B. Abbot, \$200; Irenus Hamilton, \$200; Sarah E. Hamilton, \$200; C. H. B. Foster, \$100; S. Seavey, \$300; John Abbot, \$100; G. F. Page, \$100; John Ballard, \$50; Daniel Farnum, \$50; A. C. Holt, \$50; E. and W. G. Carter, \$250; M. R. Holt, \$250; C. and J. C. Thorn, \$100; Charles E. Ballard, \$50; Andrew Bunker, \$50; W. P. Fiske, \$25; J. and G.

finish the work. A small balance of one thousand dollars, found due the contractors upon final settlement, was met by an appropriation of a part of the choice money derived from the sale of the pews, which amounted to about thirteen hundred dollars.

When, therefore, on the first day of March, 1876, our fourth meeting-house was consecrated, it was given to Jehovah as a free will offering of our people, unincumbered by any debt.¹ On that day was gratefully realized the purpose expressed in the resolution offered by the venerable ex-pastor, on the day after our third house was burned: "We, * * * * trusting still in Him, resolve with united hearts to arise and build another edifice for His worship and the honor of His name."

H. Marston, \$150; E. A. Pecker, \$500; Calvin Smart, \$25; C. W. Moore, \$100; C. F. Stewart, \$50; M. C. Herbert, \$100; James C. Whittemore, \$50; F. A. Fisk, \$250; J. H. Stewart, \$50; Isaac N. Abbot, \$50; Mrs. C. L. Gerould, \$50; Mrs. J. C. Ordway, \$200; J. E. Clifford, \$100; S. S. Kimball, \$100; F. A. Fisk, \$100; Abigail B. Walker, \$200; A. A. Moore, \$200; E. P. Gerould, \$25 — \$24,875.00.

In addition to former subscription above made, the undersigned hereby subscribe the farther sums set against their respective names, and agree to give their notes therefor, upon the conditions and for the purposes herein before set forth, payable in four instalments of twenty-five per cent. each on the first day of June, August, October and December, 1875, said subscriptions not to be binding until they shall amount in the aggregate to the sum of ten thousand dollars.

Concord, April 26, 1875.

Charles F. Stewart, \$75; Calvin Thorn, \$150; H. Richardson, \$125; E. and W. G. Carter, \$250; M. H. Bradley, \$500; J. B. Walker, \$1,000; S. Seavey, \$150; S. S. Kimball, \$400; G. F. Page, \$125; F. A. Fisk, \$150; M. C. Herbert, \$125; Isaac N. Abbot, \$200; D. A. Hill, \$50; Mrs. Robert Davis, \$100; J. H. Stewart, \$50; Enoch Gerrish, \$500; C. W. Moore, \$100; Sylvester Dana, \$50; J. H. Ballard, \$50; Morrill Dunlap, \$105; E. Jackman, \$100; E. A. Pecker, \$250; H. S. and E. F. Ordway, \$100; W. P. Fiske, \$50; C. P. Blanchard, \$100; H. P. Sweetser, \$50; Calvin Smart, \$50; N. Bouton, \$25; Andrew S. Smith, \$150; Sylvester Dana, \$25; A. C. Holt, \$50; E. A. Moulton, \$50; Benjamin Farnum, \$300; Charles A. Woolson, \$500; First Congregational Sabbath School, by C. W. Moore, superintendent, \$200; Mrs. H. Elizabeth Holt, \$150; F. D. Ayer, \$50; Charles Woodman, \$200; D. A. Hill, \$50; Perry Kittredge, \$50; E. and W. G. Carter, \$100; Isaac N. Abbot, \$100; S. Seavey, \$100; S. S. Kimball, \$100; M. R. Holt, \$100; A. S. Smith, \$100; Andrew Bunker, \$100; C. W. Motte, \$100; E. Jackman, \$100; Benjamin Farnum, \$100; George J. Sargent, \$100; F. A. Fisk, \$100; John Abbot, \$100; E. A. Pecker, \$100; G. F. Page, \$100; John Ballard, \$50; Webster and Morgan, \$1,100; Charles M. Gilvert, \$500; Walter C. Sargent, \$400; First Congregational Society, by M. H. Bradley, in accordance with a vote passed December 20, 1875, \$1,000;

Amount of collections paid by C. F. Stewart,	\$11,005.00
Amount of first subscription,	38.86
	<hr/> 24,875.00
	<hr/> \$35,918.86

¹ The order of exercises on this occasion was as follows, viz.:

Organ Voluntary, selection; Invocation, Rev. L. C. Field; Reading of the Scriptures, Rev. S. L. Blake; Hymn (Te Deum Laudamus), choir; Historical Address, Rev. Nathaniel Bouton, D. D.; Prayer, Rev. W. V. Garner; Statement of the Building Committee, Shadrach Seavey; Hymn 1016; Sermon, Rev. F. D. Ayer.

DEDICATION. (*Pastor.*) To the praise and glory of God our Father in Heaven, by whose favor we have been strengthened, encouraged, and guided in this work of our hands;

To the name and faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, head over all things to the church, in whom we trust as our Leader, Teacher, and Redeemer;

To the honor and praise of the Holy Spirit, our divine comforter and sanctifier;

To the worship of the Triune God, in song and prayer and devout meditation upon his word;

To the promulgation of the Evangelical faith, bequeathed us by the Pilgrims, and to the propagation of their church polity;

To the culture and progress of our own souls in grace and in holy living; to the loving service of our fellow-men, seeking to do them good in all things as we have opportunity, and thus to the building up of the Redeemer's Kingdom;

With humble entreaty for God's blessing, praying that He will accept our offering, and invoking His sanctifying Spirit to abide with us always,—

(*People.*) We, the members of the First Congregational Church and Society of Concord, do now dedicate this house, in the name and to the worship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

(*Choir.*) Gloria Patri.

Dedicatory Prayer, Rev. J. G. Davis, D. D.; Hymn, choir and congregation.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

And as the ages come and go,

Let temples, fair in every land,

Adorned with grace and glory stand.

Praise Him, all creatures here below,

While mountains rise or oceans flow;

Let every household swell the song.

And myriad choirs the notes prolong.

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,

Who know Him best and love Him most;

Let heaven with joy catch up the strain,

And earth repeat the sweet refrain.

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,

Amid whose glories we are lost,

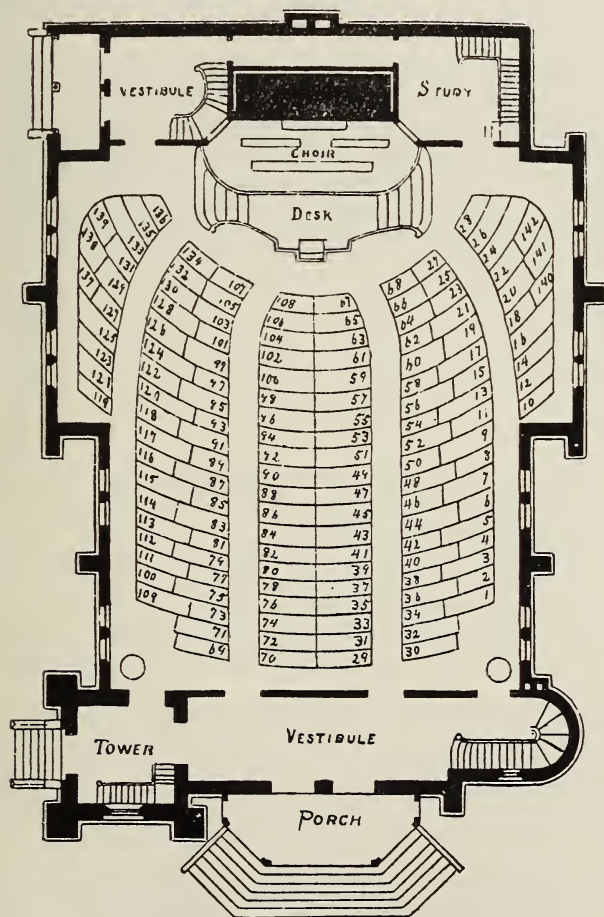
As, gazing on the eternal throne,

We see Jehovah's glorious form.

Benediction.

I must not omit to mention that the carpets, pew-cushions, and some other articles of furniture, which cost about seventeen hundred dollars, were presented by the ladies of the society. The elegant pulpit bible was the gift of George A. Blanchard, Esq., of Concord.

This house has an outside length of one hundred and six feet and six inches. Its width across the transept is seventy-one feet and four inches, and across the nave fifty-seven feet and four inches. The height of the ridge is fifty-two feet and six inches, and that of the spire is one hundred and forty-nine feet and three inches. The audience room is finished to the apex of the roof, displaying the beams and rafters. The wood work is of ash and the pulpit and pews of black walnut. It is plainly frescoed, lighted by windows of stained glass, and seats comfortably about seven hundred persons, none of whom, except those in the gallery, sit more than sixty feet from the pulpit.¹ The following floor plan shows its general arrangement :



FLOOR PLAN OF OUR FOURTH MEETING-HOUSE.

¹ The plan of this meeting-house embraces also that of a chapel to adjoin it on the west. This will contain a convenient audience room for small meetings, a ladies' parlor, and such other apartments as the wants of the Society have suggested. That this will, at no distant day, take the place of our present chapel, there is little reason to doubt.

This society has had two bells. The first, to which allusion has already been made, was moved from our second to our third meeting-house not long after its erection. There for a generation it called the living to worship, and tolled for the dead. When this building was burned, it shared its fate. A portion of it found among the ruins was subsequently sold, and the proceeds set apart towards the purchase of another.

But so completely did the erection of the new house absorb the efforts of our people that the subject of a bell gained slight attention until a good woman, of slender means, called upon Dr. Bouton, and expressing a desire to contribute something for a new bell, handed him fifty dollars. When the honest Doctor, astonished at the magnitude of her gift, mildly intimated a fear that her liberality might be surpassing her pecuniary ability, she quietly replied that she "had earned the money with her own hands," and therefore further remonstrance was withheld. This disinterested act touched many hearts. A subscription was soon after opened, and solicitations, made largely by Mr. Mark R. Holt, met with such a response, within the society and without, that an amount was soon secured sufficient for the purchase not only of a bell, but of a steeple clock as well.¹

The former, weighing a little over three thousand pounds, was raised to its present position in the tower late in the autumn of 1874. It was made in Troy, New York, by Meneely & Sons. Its tones, as sweet as they are ponderous, recall to all conversant with its history the beneficence of the poor woman now gone to her reward.² The clock, made by Howard, of Boston, was introduced some months later. Unlike its predecessor, it has proved eminently truthful.

The whole cost of our fourth meeting-house, with its furnishing and lot, was substantially as follows, viz :

House, gas fixtures and furnaces,	\$36,083.86
Bell and clock,	1,800.00
Organ and motor,	5,300.00
Carpets and upholstery,	1,700.00
Land given by pew-owners of third house,	6,000.00
	<hr/>
	\$50,883.86

Our four meeting-houses indicate very clearly the social and civil conditions of the people by whom they were erected. They differed widely one from another and answered different requirements.

Our first meeting-house, built solely by the axe and of logs in the forest shade, answered the double purpose of sanctuary and fortress. It tells of exposure to Indian foes, of a receding wilderness and of virgin soils for the first time upturned to the sun, of resolute fathers and brave mothers daring privations and dangers upon an Indian frontier that they might secure fair heritages to their children.

Our second meeting-house met the requirements of a later period, when population had increased and the wilderness had largely disappeared; when the limits of townships and parishes were identical; when the entire people of a town worshipped in one sanctuary, and the maintenance of public religious service was assessed by law upon the polls and estates of all. Meeting-houses centrally located and large were then required, and huge, barn-like structures of

1 Nov. 9, 1874. "Voted, That the insurance money received from the old bell now on hand, amounting to about one hundred and nine dollars, be appropriated towards the new bell."

On motion of W. G. Carter,—

"Voted, That the committee be authorized and instructed to order at once a metal bell, of not less than 2,400 lbs. weight, and a Howard clock, at a price reported by the committee."

On motion of S. Dana,—

"Voted, That the Society will stand by the committee in making up any deficiency that may occur."—*Society Records*, Vol. 3, pages 118, 119.

2 Mrs. Elizabeth C. Hall, who died September 25, 1878.

two stories everywhere arose, as uninviting as they were capacious. These gradually disappeared after the passage of the toleration act, as town societies gave place to denominational associations.

The characteristics of our third meeting-house were fixed by the wants of the denominational period, when small societies called for small houses of worship, and the hitherto prevailing pattern of huge, cubic structures of two stories was changed to parallelogram-shaped houses of one story. The modest facades of these, with their tapering spires and long side windows, indicate the dawn of esthetic culture and a desire for architectural advancement.

Our fourth meeting-house, in which we are now convened, was intended to meet the necessities of the present period, when, in populous towns, small denominational organizations have grown to large ones, and esthetic and social culture has called for increased conveniences and a better architecture. The skill of the hardy axe man of 1730, or of the village carpenter of later times, no longer suffices to plan our houses of worship. Higher skill, and taste more elevated are sought, that God's house may be fair and fit for the indwelling of His Spirit.

But the characteristics of these four meeting-houses are not peculiar to Concord or to New Hampshire. They belong as well to similar periods and like communities throughout New England. And we must not forget that the rough house of logs and the huge building upon the bleak hill, and the modest structure of a single story and the gothic fane, with lofty spire and high resounding arches, all alike express the one great thought of man's instinctive need to worship God, and that the same benignant Spirit cheered the hearts and nerved the arms of our ancestors in their rude block-house beside the brook, which beams in love upon us, their successors, here to-day.

OCT 23 1900

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: April 2006

PreservationTechnologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017 457 304 9